

Free Iron-Ons! ★ Meet Our Cover Contest Winners

American Girl®

Celebrating 10 years of fun!

November/December 2003 ★ \$3.95

Contest!

Design a
T-Shirt

Check Out Our
Photo Shoot

Extra Games
and **Fun!**



Take a
Cool Quiz
Make Holiday
Crafts
Throw a
**New Year's
Party**

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Hilary Duff Inside! ★ Meet Our Cover Contest Winners

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See AG online!

Visit americangirl.com for more fun from AG magazine. Always get permission from a parent before surfing the Web or giving out your full name, address, or any other personal info.



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americangirl.com

Feeling Shy

Are you bashful? AG readers share their best advice in Heart to Heart.

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To You, from You

Write yourself a letter to read in the future.

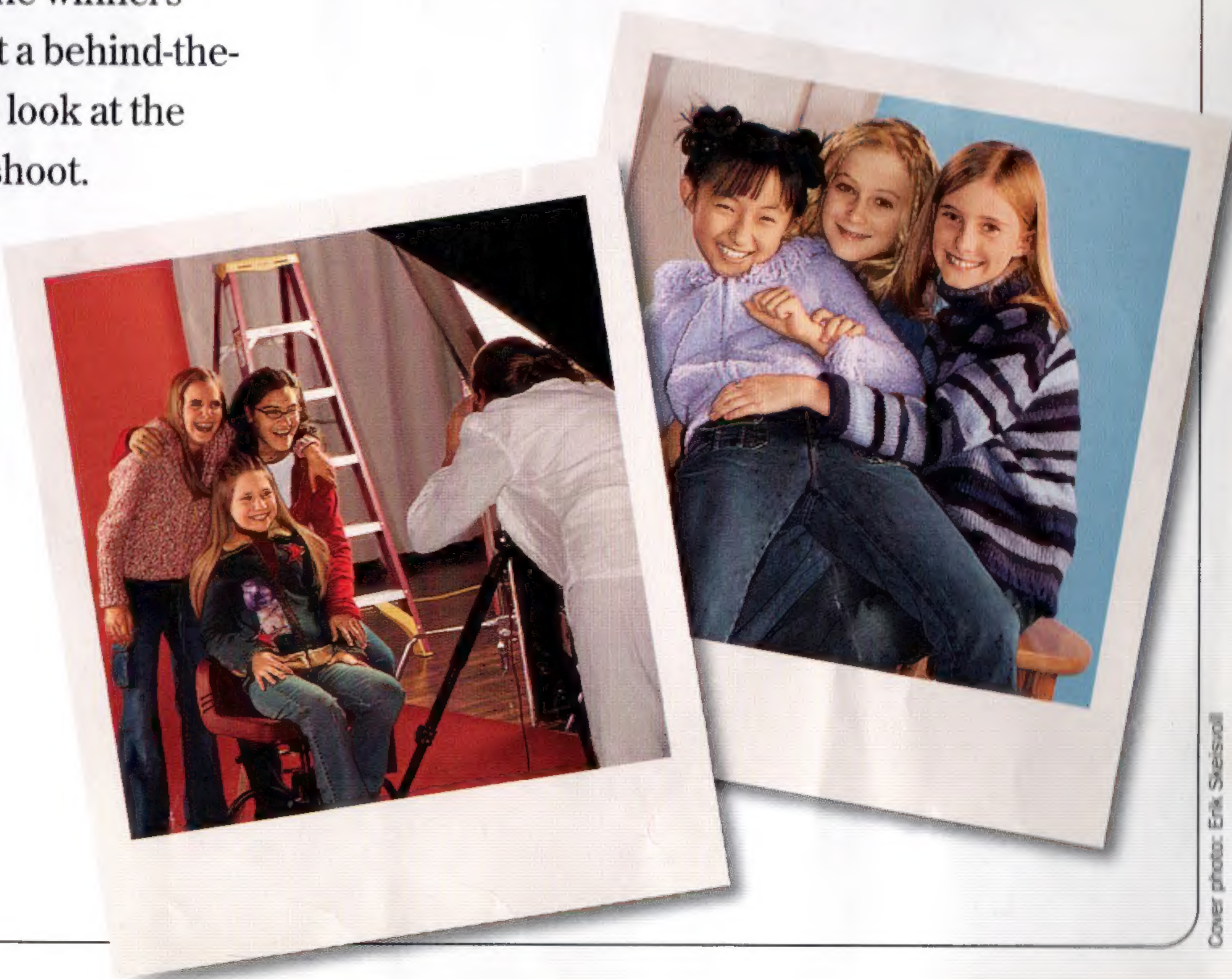
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AG's Cover Girls

Meet the winners and get a behind-the-scenes look at the cover shoot.

8



Letter from Us

Dear Reader,

This has been an **amazing** year at *American Girl*, and it's all because of **you**.

You helped us celebrate our **10th** birthday with **wonderful** contest entries.

Our cover contest was the **most** popular contest ever—more than **6,800**

of you entered! Because of that, we decided to put **two** front covers on this issue and show **twice** as many **winners** as we originally planned. When you finish reading this half of the issue, **flip** your magazine over for more **fun**!

Here's some **news** we think you'll **like**. Because you've shown us that you **love** the "Reader Surprises" so much, we're going to **keep** them going! Look for more of them—and other **surprises**, too—in upcoming issues.

Thanks for making our **10th** birthday year so **great**!

Your Friends at American Girl

Letters from You



Just Peachy

We tried the "Crush Slush" recipe from "Berry Cool" in the July/August 2003 issue. It was so good that we decided to create our own version. Instead of just using strawberries, we also added eight frozen peach slices. Thanks for the idea!

Kelly B.
Leanna B.

Both age 12, Wisconsin



Funny Money

I loved your "Super Tips for Comic Strips" in July/August. It inspired me to make a comic of my own. I'm going to sell it, and maybe I'll earn a few bucks!

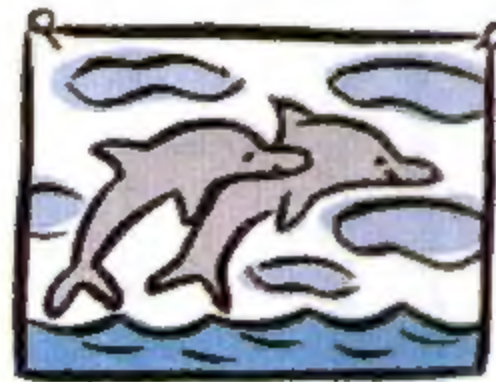
Gabby D.

Age 12, New York

Reader Surprise

In this issue, you'll read about our newest Reader Surprise contest! To enter, just send a postcard by December 15 with your first and last name, address, and phone number to:

Reader Surprise—N/D
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



Dolphin Dreams

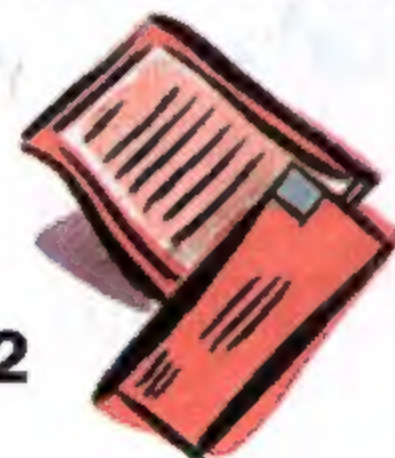
My brother and I share a room, and it was hard for us to agree on a theme for it. We finally decided on animals. I was so happy to get the dolphin poster in July/August because it fit right in and really brightened up our room.

Ellie M.
Age 9, Georgia

Write to Us!

Want to drop us a line? Write us at:

AmericanGirl
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562



You can also send letters via e-mail to im_agmag_editor@pleasantco.com.

Either way, be sure to include your first and last name and your birth date. We can't use every letter we receive, but we read and learn from each one.

Official Rules

1. Drawing not open to employees of Pleasant Company and its affiliates.
2. Only one entry per family.
3. To be valid, all entries must be received by mail by December 15, 2003. Entries may not be faxed or e-mailed.
4. All entries become the property of Pleasant Company and will not be returned.
5. Void where prohibited by law.

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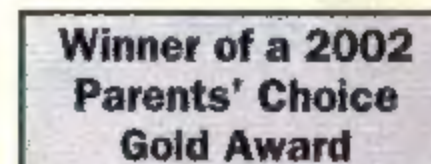
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Girls Express



Buzzword

American girls everywhere will be using this buzzword this season:

kismet

How to say it: KIZ-met

What it means: fate, destiny

Where it comes from: the Arabic word *qasama*, which means to divide or distribute

One way to use it: "Trina called it kismet when she ran into her pal from summer camp during a visit to the city."



The buzzword is tucked somewhere into this issue of AG. Can you find it? Answer is on page 20.

The Greatest Gift



Baby Lacey

Snowboarder and activist Lacey W. lives every day to its fullest. When Lacey was a baby, a virus attacked her heart, and she needed a heart transplant. "Thanks to God, a family made the decision to give me their dying son's heart," Lacey, now 14, explains. "I was given a second chance at life, and I'm not going to waste one second of it."

For as long as she can remember, Lacey has been spreading the word about organ donation. Last winter, the California girl showed off her snowboarding skills at a special competition for kids who have had transplants. Lacey has also spoken to state lawmakers, adults, and many other kids about organ donation.

"When I talk to kids about my heart, they're amazed," Lacey says. "Some of them don't really get it at first. They ask me lots of questions, like, 'Did it hurt?' But then they start to understand, and they think it's great. People need to know just how successful transplants can be."



AG

POLL

Your answers:

In our July/August 2003 issue, we asked you which books you'd most like to see made into movies. Here are some of your top picks for books as flicks:



Good news! *Ella Enchanted* and the Lemony Snicket stories are both set to hit theaters next year.

Next question:

Attention animal lovers! We're planning an all-animal issue, and we want to know which animal movies you like.



Tell us your all-time favorite animal movie:

I Like Finding Nemo &

Mascot Mania!

You sent us more than 3,300 funny, cute, and kooky ideas for a new mascot for AG. Here are some of the characters we loved.

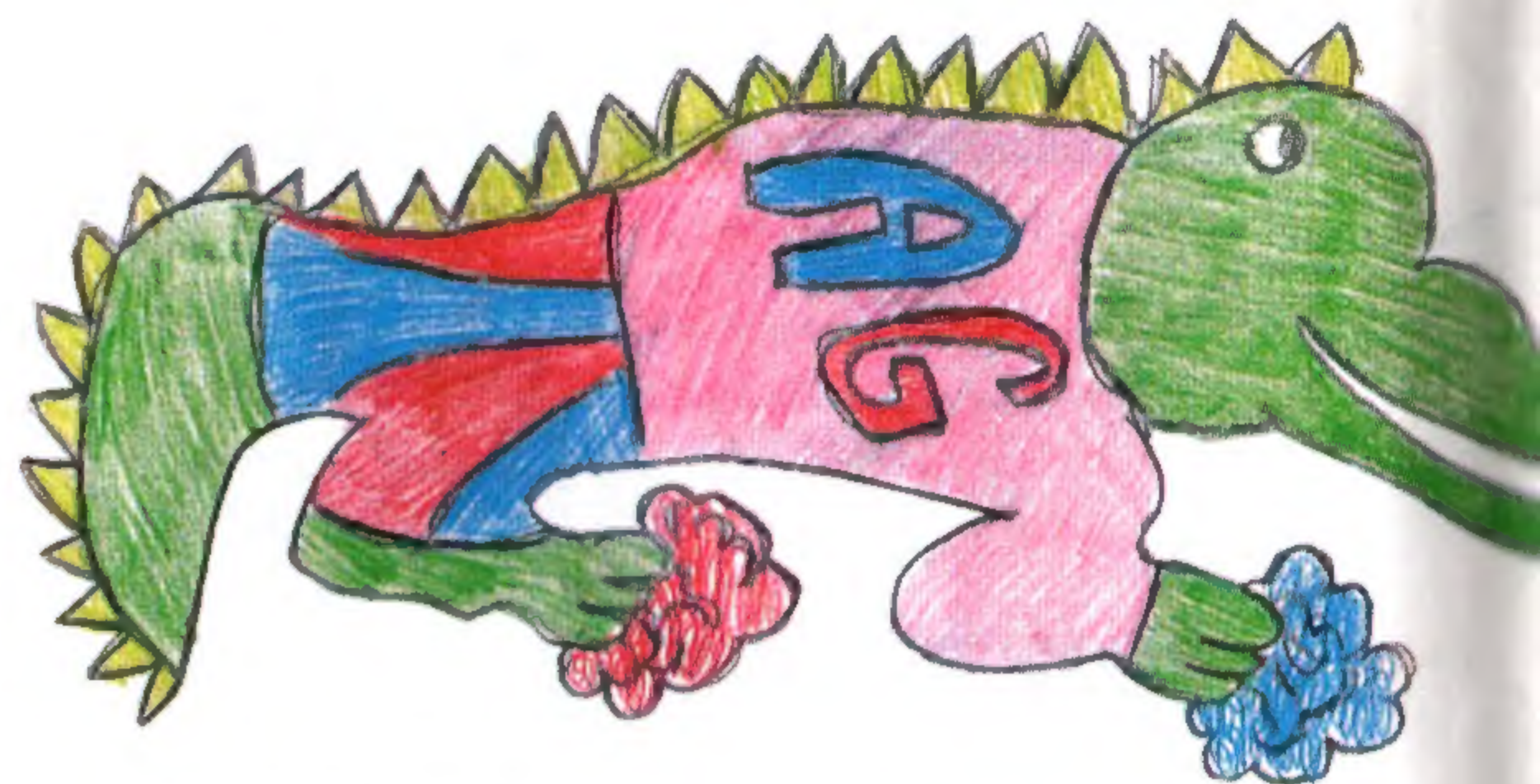


"The magazine's mascot should be a lightbulb because

it gives so much inspiration."

Sara B.

Age 11, Oregon



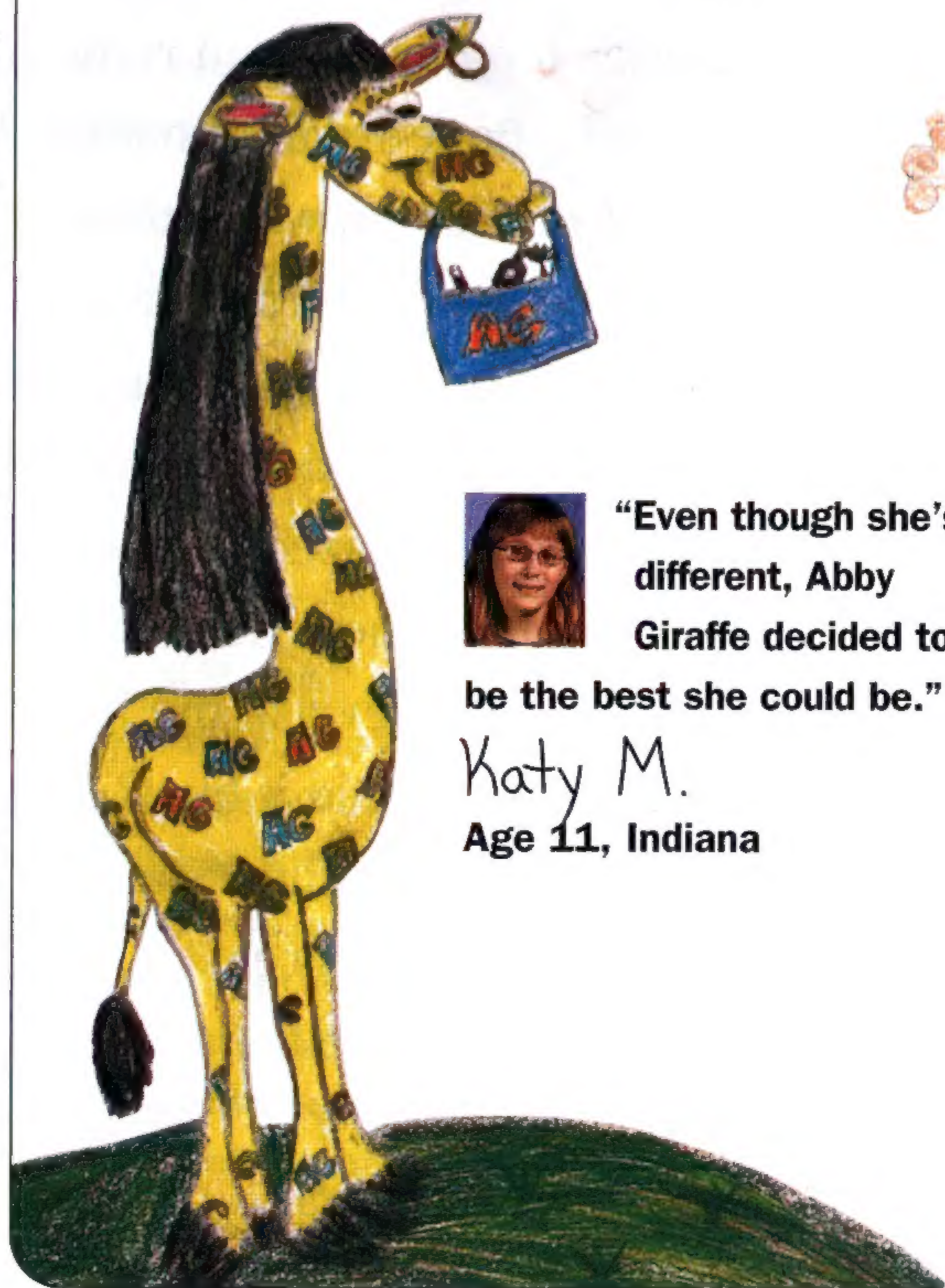
"Allie Gator is an awesome, genuine alligator you can't find anywhere but the magazine."



Mary H.
Age 11, Iowa



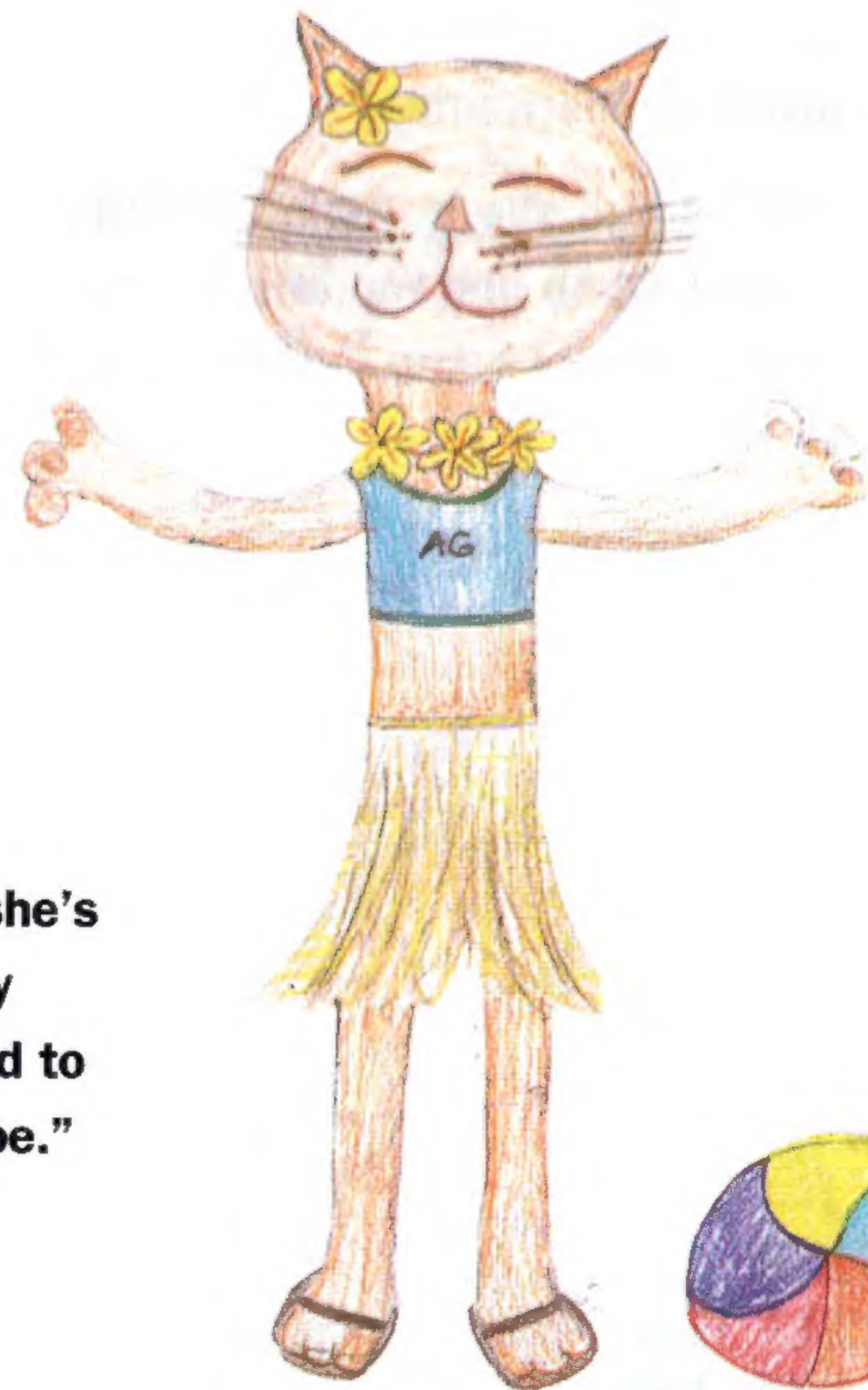
Megan W.
Age 11, Iowa



"Even though she's different, Abby Giraffe decided to be the best she could be."

Katy M.

Age 11, Indiana



"Hula Kitty looks great for the magazine."

Breeann F.

Age 13, Montana

The Young Black Stallion and The Jungle Book 2 images © Disney Enterprises, Inc. Finding Nemo image © Disney/PIXAR

Mail your answer to us with your first and last name, address, and birth date.



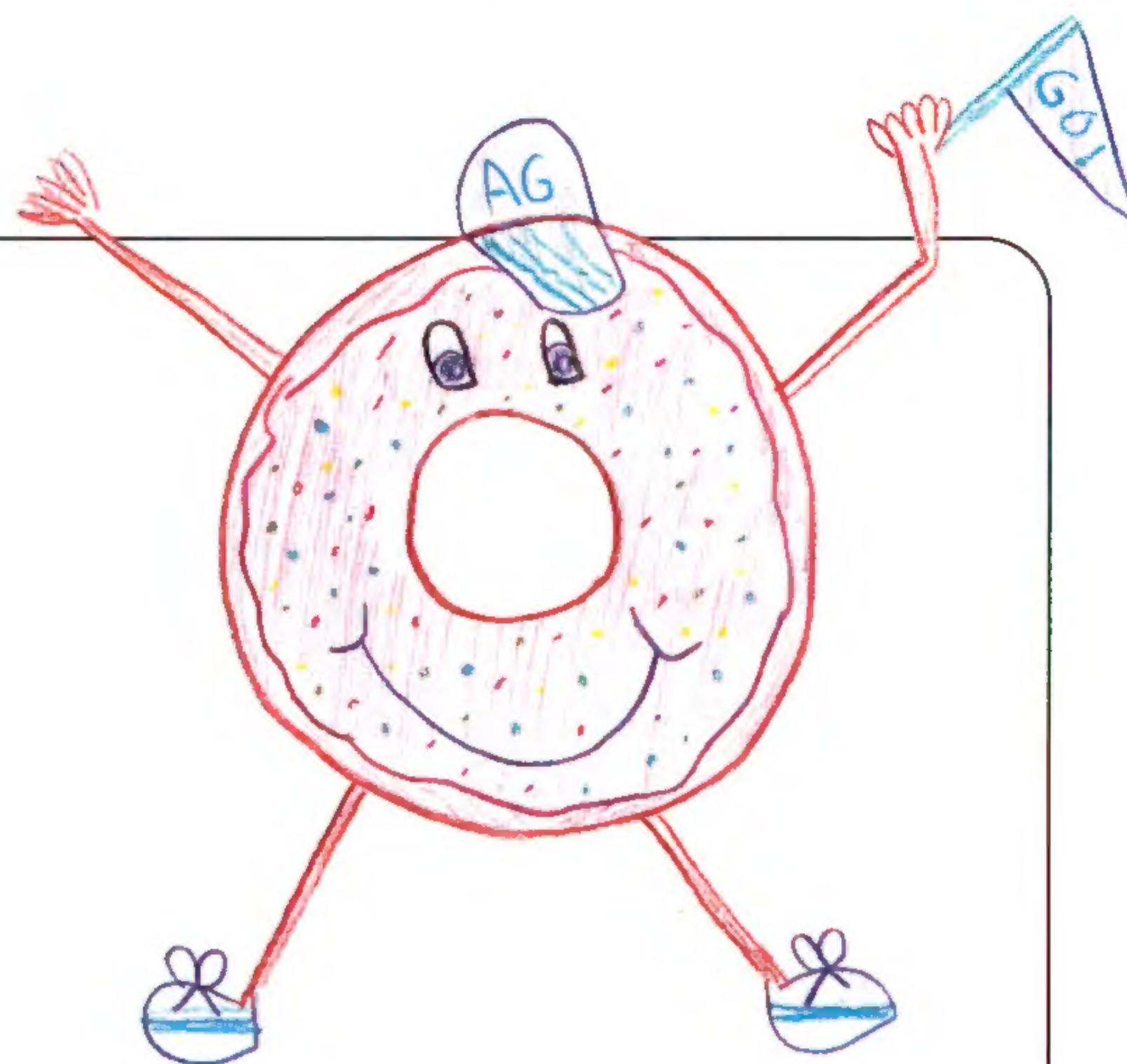
"Just like AG, Bananas is creative, sporty, kind, and a party animal!"

Tia B.
Age 10, Pennsylvania



"AG readers are as sweet as honey, and AG workers are as busy as bees."

Paula S.
Age 11, Ohio



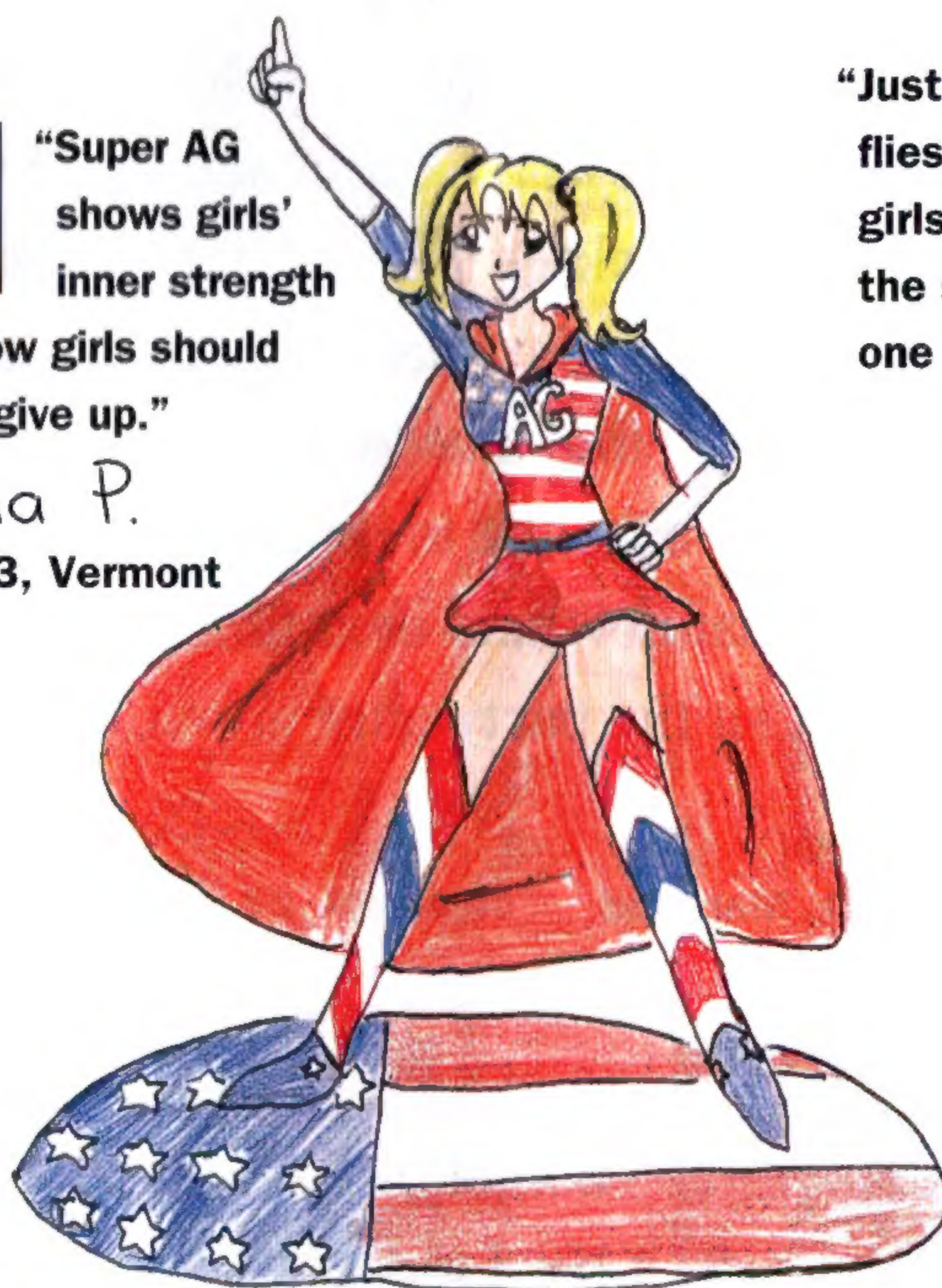
"The American Girl donut is well-rounded!"

Elaine P.
Age 9, Washington



"Super AG shows girls' inner strength and how girls should never give up."

Alicia P.
Age 13, Vermont



"Just like butterflies, no two girls are exactly the same. Each one is unique."



Sarah V.
Age 12, California



Hannah V.
Age 12, California



Abby B.
Age 11, California



"This parrot is spunky, and he knows just what to say, like AG."

Janis M.
Age 11, California



New Contest: Create a T-shirt

Dream up the cutest T-shirt ever! Draw your fantasy T-shirt, and send your design to T-shirt Contest, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562 along with your first and last name, address, and birth date. Deadline: December 15, 2003. Winners will appear in the May/June 2004 issue.

Heart to Heart

Feeling Shy

When do you feel shy? How do you handle being bashful? What are some tips for being more outgoing?



When you're at a party and you feel shy, stick

with the people who make you feel safe. When you start to feel better, you can start roaming around and meeting people. I did that at a baby shower with my mom, and it worked.

Mackenzie M.

Age 11, Vermont



If a new family is coming to your house for a visit,

have a board game or craft project ready for any kids who will be coming.

You'll be laughing and talking in no time.

Katie P.

Age 11, Arizona



At my cousin's Bat Mitzvah party, I didn't

know anyone except my sister. We spent the whole night at our table drinking water. I was feeling so shy that I didn't even get up to dance, something I usually like to do. I regret that now, and next time I won't sit the party out.

Allison W.

Age 11, Maryland



Sometimes it is hard to talk to people because

you are not feeling confident. If this is the case, write down everything that you like about yourself. If you feel shy, look at your list for self-confidence.

Jennifer J.

Age 13, Texas



At school, we had an assignment to sing in front of

the class. I told my group that I was feeling shy. We decided that I would pretend to videotape them as if we were making a music video. There's always a way to do something that won't make you feel uncomfortable.

Nerica U.

Age 12, New York



People think I'm shy because I'm very quiet. Really,

I'm full of adventure, and I'm always up for trying something new. Don't let other people tell you who you are. *You* decide.

Emilie C.

Age 12, Iowa



Even an outgoing person can be shy sometimes.

I'm shy meeting people. When I get shy, I swallow my fears and say hello. Everything's easy from there. You just need to get out the first word.

Lindsey S.

Age 11, Maryland



My parents were shy growing up, but now they're

outgoing. They tell me that in time, I'll feel relaxed around others and not afraid to let my thoughts and opinions out.

Laura R.

Age 14, California



Once a classmate cut in front of me in line because

she thought I'd be too shy to stop her. But I surprised her when I spoke up and said no. If you don't speak up, others won't know how you really feel.

Kassandra G.H.

Age 10, New Jersey



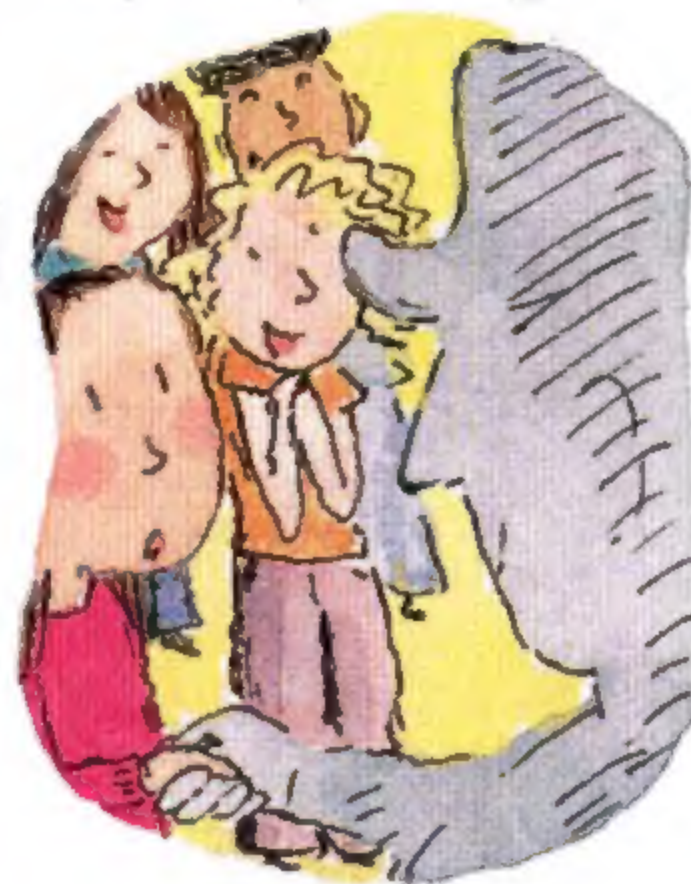
I went to a Tim McGraw concert and had back-

stage passes. Shaking his hand, I was too shy to say anything.

Afterward, I knew that I had missed a great opportunity.

Haley T.

Age 11, Maryland



I get shy when my family praises me because of

something good I did. So I say to myself, *They're doing this because they love me.*

Instead of being shy, I should just love them back!

April M.

Age 13, Michigan



I was shy and didn't like reading my work aloud

in class. I was worried that it was bad. Now, I've realized that my work is good. Never be afraid to share your work—you're your own worst critic!

Liza M.

Age 12, Massachusetts



When I was little, I was shy just because I was

young. Now, I'm a pro at meeting people, and I enjoy not being shy anymore. It feels like I've come out of my shell and opened up to the world!

Haley S.

Age 13, Florida

Speak from Your Heart

Next subject: Secrets. How do you keep a secret? Is it ever O.K. to tell a secret? When should you share a secret? When should you not? How well do your friends keep your secrets? How do you feel when you reveal a secret—or a friend does?

Send answers, first and last name, birth date, and photo to the address on page 2.

Deadline: December 8, 2003.

Some answers will appear in the May/June 2004 issue. ★



Julia D.



Jacqueline K.



Austin S.



AG's Cover Girls!

You've seen the covers—now meet the contest winners
and see what AG's cover shoot was like!

Westin S.



Skye S.



Erica R.



Determined



Winner

Julia D.

Age 11, Florida

Julia's project: Julia made a really beautiful book that tells her life story in photos and in her own words. Julia was born in Ukraine and lived in an orphanage for six years. She had problems with her right leg, but surgery didn't help. After she was adopted by her American family, she had to have her leg removed. Julia uses an artificial leg now, and her determination to be like any other American girl has helped her to learn how to dance ballet, be a cheerleader, play soccer, ice-skate, and even ride a bicycle!



Judges' comments about her project: "Her determination shows on every page." "She never gave up." "This girl is unstoppable!"

Julia's favorite part of AG magazine: The crafts

Julia's favorite part of the AGH shoot: Having her picture taken!

Winner

Jacqueline K.

Age 10, California

Jacqueline's project: Jacqueline wrote and illustrated a whole issue of AG herself, including a craft on how to

make a perfumed bookmark, a food quiz, a mystery story, and valentines to share with friends. She also designed the pages and bound them into one jam-packed issue.

Judges' comments about her project: "Creative crafts and ideas." "It takes a lot of work to put a magazine together, and she did the whole job herself—beautifully!"

Jacqueline's favorite part of AG magazine: The quizzes

Jacqueline's favorite part of the AGH shoot: Getting to meet the AG staff and making new friends



Winners

Westin S. and Austin S.

Age 11 and age 9, California

Westin and Austin's projects:

Together, Westin and Austin create a weekly newspaper called *Coyote Courier*. The sisters have written and illustrated stories about the wildlife that lives nearby, adventures they've had with their pets, ways their family celebrates holidays, and what it was like to get their ears pierced. Each sister created her own book describing how she helps make the newspaper, and their books fit together to show how the girls work as a team.

Judges' comments about their projects:

"The split face concept was so cool."

"What I liked most was that they wrote about everyday events in a way that was interesting to read." "Their funny, clever writing and drawings showed that they're creative not just in the newspaper they produce, but in all parts of their lives."

Westin's favorite part of AG magazine:

The True Story in Girls Express

Westin's favorite part of the cover

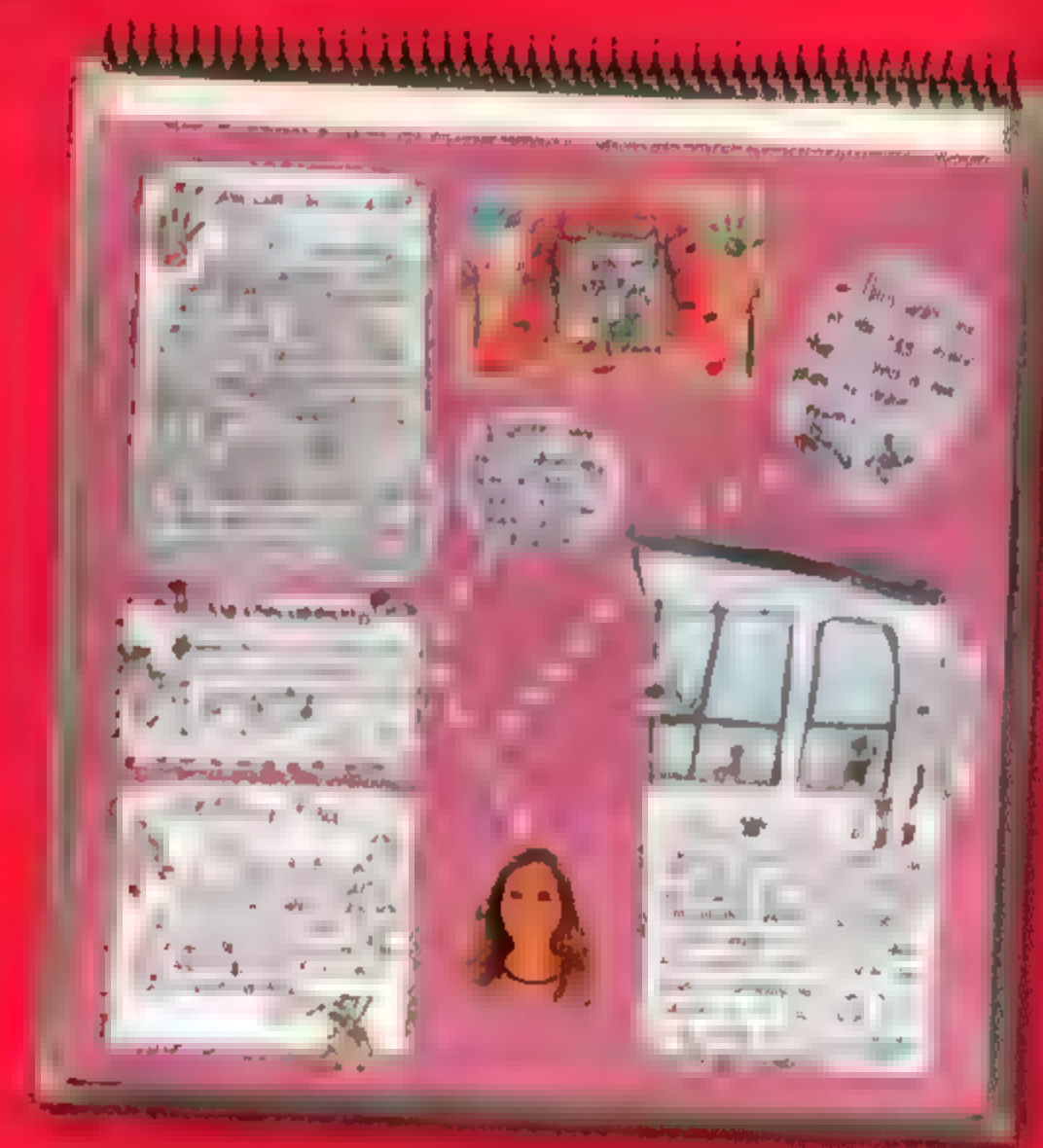
shoot: Getting to ride in a limousine

Austin's favorite part of AG magazine:

The buzzword

Austin's favorite part of the cover

shoot: Trying on all the clothes



Creative





Winner

Skye S.

Age 12, Arizona

Skye's project: A video that shows the many fun—and funny!—sides of Skye. Skye played different characters in her video, each one representing part of her personality. One character was Singing Skye, who finished her sweet version of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” with a wild drum solo. Another was Sister Skye, who loves to read stories to her little brother—whether he wants to hear them or not. She even included her own flubs from filming!

Judges' comments about her project: “I couldn’t stop laughing!” “Skye should have her own TV show.” “This



Singing Skye



Sister Skye



Silly Skye



is a hilarious collage of her talents. Skye is the definition of fun!”

Skye's favorite part of AG magazine: The winning stories written by girls from the Short Story Contests

Skye's favorite part of the cover shoot: Meeting the other winners

Winner

Erin R.

Age 13, Arizona

Erin's project: Erin made a scrapbook of the many areas of her life in which she has great determination to succeed. Erin showed how, with the help of her foster family, she challenges herself

to do well in school, strives to be a responsible role model to her siblings, and has a strong spirit even when life is difficult. Her determination has made her life better and makes the world a better place, too.

Judges' comments about her project: “She doesn’t let life’s challenges get in the way of her goals.” “This is a girl

whose days are filled with thoughts of how she can be the best person she can be.” “She is truly amazing.”

Erin's favorite part of AG magazine: The articles about things other girls have done

Erin's favorite part of the cover shoot: Getting to meet other AG readers



Determined



Behind the Scenes

The winners spent two great days at AG's photo shoot in Chicago.



A limo waits to take Erin and the other winners to the photo studio.



A cheer before the shoot gets everyone excited.



Keeping track of different clothing combos for the red cover



Erin with her rockin' rollers



Westin grabs a bite during a break.



Photographer Monica snaps Skye's photo as a wind machine blows her hair.



Sharing a laugh on the red set



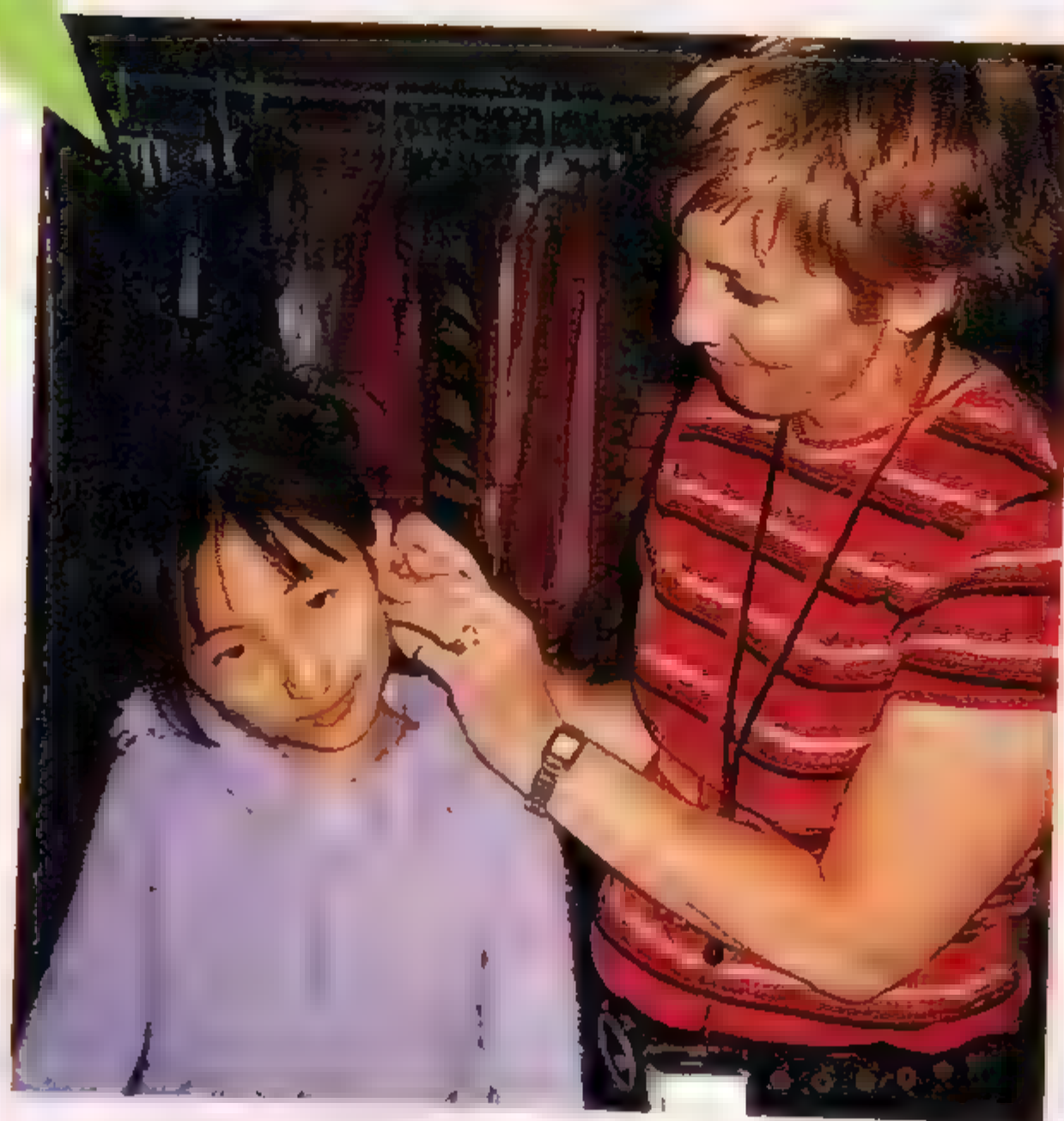
Judy, Monica, and the girls look at test photos.



They started as strangers, but Kismet made them friends.



Judy, the wardrobe stylist, helps Julia try on an outfit.



Jacqueline's ears aren't pierced, so Judy attaches earrings with special glue!



How to relax between shots?
By watching movies, of course!



Goofing around on the blue set



Red + Blue = real AG Spirit!



Hooray! Time to celebrate after a fantastic photo shoot. ★

Honorable Mentions

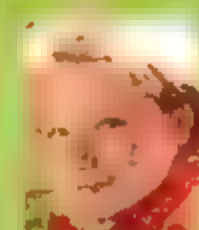
These girls represent the true spirit of AG, too!



STEPHANIE R.
Age 13, Michigan



Makayla M.
Age 10, Michigan



Emma M.
Age 9, Washington



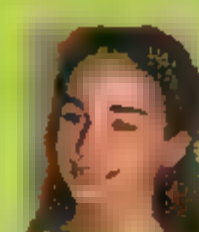
Angel A.
Age 13, Florida



Hilary P.
Age 11, South Carolina



Chrissy D.
Age 12, Pennsylvania



RACHEL W.
Age 11, Michigan



Hannah T.
Age 13, Illinois



Brianna E.
Age 11, California



Brook B.
Age 12, Ohio



Abigail B.
Age 12, Tennessee



Caitlin M.
Age 10, California



Julianne D.
Age 12, Ohio

Girls who entered the cover contest chose the word "creative" to describe themselves more often than any of the other words.



To YOU, from US

Here's a letter
to you from
all of us at
American Girl.



We **love** our readers! 

Over the past **ten** years readers like
you have brought us joy because you...

make us giggle with your **goofy** jokes • love your
families • sing **silly** songs • stick up for your **friends**

• enjoy helping others • share your fears and dreams with us

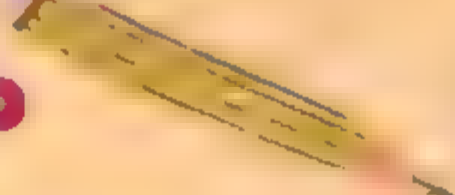
• are up for new **adventures** • get creative with


 our contests • care about the environment  • smile

with a **sparkle** • cheer on your teammates 

• try your best • **Amaze** us with your true stories •

care about what's fair • cuddle your pets  • can't

wait to read a good book •  love to doodle • perform

plays with **Pizzazz** • have a flair for fashion 

• are good sports, win or lose  • can keep a secret •

• wish upon lucky stars • dare to be the **first** to

dance • use your **smarts** at school •

dream big • **Never** give up • **Believe** in us •

believe in yourselves • believe in tomorrow •

Thanks for a wonderful ten years. Here's to **ten** more!

 Your friends at American Girl



To YOU, from YOU

Write a special
letter to your-
self to open in
10 years!



Fill in the blanks to capture
what life is like right now—
from your friendships to your
dreams for the future. Then
cut out the letter, seal it,
and put it in a safe place.
Don't open the letter until
the date marked on the
back. In ten years, you'll
have a great time looking
back at 2003!

The Giggle Gang



Belly Laughs



ing in the snow, the Giggle Gang met for hot chocolate and cookies.
to tell a food joke and asked the others to figure out the punch line.
e letter from the punch-line list next to the joke that it matches.



Carefully cut along dotted line.

Maya. Maya who? Maya fingers are cold!

Alex. Alex who? Alex plain later.

Sara. Sara who? Sara reason you don't like eggnog?

Olive. Olive who? Olive the holidays!

Lena. Lena who? Lena little closer so I can give you a hug.

To YOU, from US

Here's a letter
to you from
all of us at
American Girl.

We **love** our readers!
Over the past **ten** years re
you have brought us joy bec

make us giggle with your **goofy** jo
families • sing **silly** songs • stick

• enjoy helping others • share your fea

• are up for new **adventures**

 our contests • care about the envi

with a **sparkle** • cheer on your

• try your best • **Amaze** us wit

care about what's fair • cuddle your pe

wait to read a good book •  love to

plays with **Pizza** • have a fla

• are good sports, win or lose  • ca


wish upon lucky stars • dare to be

dance • use your **smarts**

dream big • **NEVER** give up • **Be**

believe in yourselves • believe in tomor

Thanks for a wonderful ten years. Here

 Your friends at American Girl

Make a time capsule
of 2003! Use these
ideas to get started.
You can include:

- Fun photos of you and your friends
- A tape of your favorite songs
- Your class photo
- Your favorite state quarter
- A copy of your favorite book
- Your hand traced on paper
- A friendship pin
- The front page of your local newspaper
- This issue of AG magazine
- This letter to yourself!

The Giggle Gang



Belly Laughs



After a day of playing in the snow, the Giggle Gang met for hot chocolate and cookies. Each girl decided to tell a food joke and asked the others to figure out the punch line.

Write down the letter from the punch-line list next to the joke that it matches.

How did the baker stop customers from stealing her bagels?
1. G

Why was a little girl allowed to work at an ice cream parlor?
2. C

Where do they make alligator soup?
3. F

How do bakers keep track of all the buns they bake?
5. E

What desserts do astronauts like most?
4. D

Why did the dieter eat a candle?
6. I

Why did the doughnut go to the dentist?
7. H

Why do tomatoes look so well rested?
8. A

How do fast-food restaurants stop break-ins?
9. B

Punch-line list:
 A. They sleep on beds of lettuce.
 B. Burger alarms
 C. She went to Sundae school.
 D. Floats
 E. They take roll call.
 F. In a croc pot
 G. She put lox on them.
 H. To get a chocolate filling
 I. She wanted a light snack.

Sara. Sara who? Sara reason you don't like eggnog?

Olive. Olive who? Olive the holidays!

Lena. Lena who? Lena little closer so I can give you a hug.



Try these knock-knock jokes on all your holiday visitors!

Knock, knock! Who's there?

Isabelle. Isabelle who? Isabelle ringing?



Wanda if we'll have a snow dry soon?



Maya. Maya who? Maya fingers are cold!



Alex. Alex who? Alex plain later.



The Giggle Gang

Snowbank!

Dig into your bank to play this board game! You'll need a handful of dimes and pennies to play.



- 1.** You put dimes on two matching boxes.
- 2.** Your pal covers two other matching boxes with pennies.
- 3.** On your turn, lay down two more dimes on matching boxes. Try to get three of your dimes to line up and down in a row, like a snowman—or try to block your friend from making her penny snowman.
- 4.** The first to make a snowman wins!



Ada. Ada who? Ada yummy piece of pecan pie!

Minnie. Minnie who?

Knock, knock. Who's there?

Dawn. Dawn who? Dawn look now. I'm wrapping your present!

Ida. Ida who? Ida know if I can wait for Hanukkah!

All answers on page



Wacky Hollywordies

Can you figure out the movies hidden in these wacky wordies?

1. **STALLION**

2. mermaid

3. M.D. Do

4. **KING**

5. hor**o**bo**d**

6. stewart

7. Wonder**Alice**land

8.

9.

Hot and Cold

After a wintry day outside, get warm next to the fireplace and search for 10 cold and 10 hot words in the puzzle below. Words run up, down, across, and diagonally.

T	C	G	S	U	L	T	R	Y	Y	U	A
A	G	I	Y	P	O	L	A	R	E	I	B
M	S	Y	T	R	E	E	B	G	S	D	L
N	N	C	R	C	E	U	X	N	I	I	I
I	G	I	O	E	R	I	H	I	Z	L	S
P	A	N	P	N	V	A	F	K	Z	E	T
P	M	W	I	L	A	I	C	A	L	G	E
Y	Y	N	C	H	D	C	H	B	I	S	R
T	G	L	A	Q	C	O	Y	S	N	P	I
S	W	E	L	T	E	R	I	N	G	O	N
O	S	G	N	I	L	I	O	B	L	B	G
R	J	J	C	V	H	E	I	C	E	W	Q
F	R	I	G	I	D	C	L	K	S	S	R

- arctic

boiling

glacial

sultry
- baking

frosty

scorching

polar
- chilly

burning

icy

sweltering
- blistering

gelid

sizzling

shivery
- frigid

fiery

nippy

tropical



Minnie girls are coming to my party. Tamara. Tamara who? Tamara morning we can open our presents! Mary. Mary who?

Illustrations: Paul Meisel

Shirley. Shirley who? Shirley you must know me by now! Rita. Rita who? Rita good book over vacation? Mary Christmas and Happy New Year!



The Giggle Gang

Fuzzy Math

How can **3 + 25 = 1**? Because **3** quarters plus **25** cents equals **1** dollar! Fill in the blanks to solve these tricky equations.

1. 13 stripes + 50 stars = 1 U.S. flag

2. 5 vowels + 21 consonants = 1 alphabet

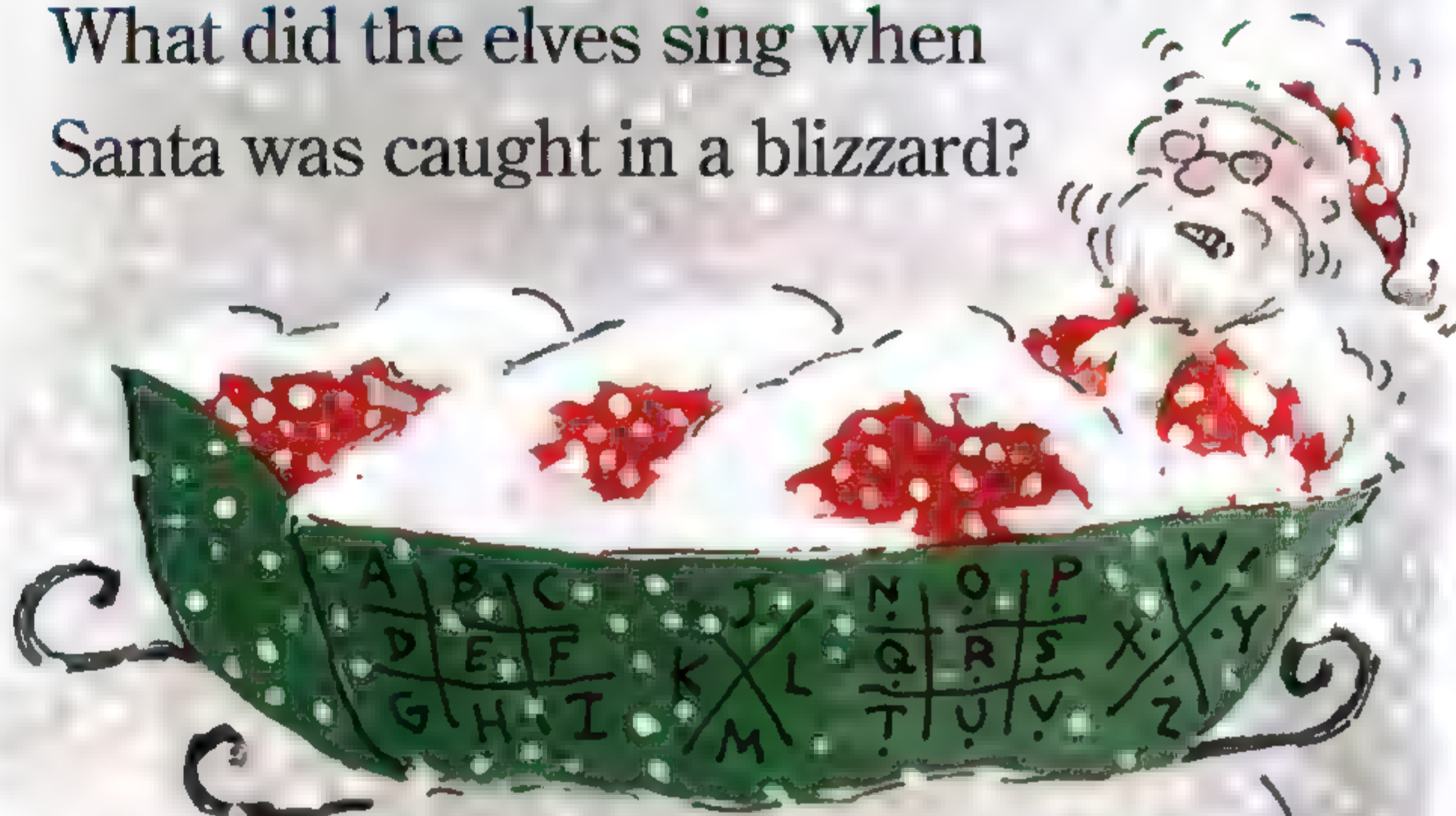
3. 8 digits + 2 arms = 2 hands

4. 2 quarts + 3 gallons = 1 gallon



AG Code

What did the elves sing when Santa was caught in a blizzard?



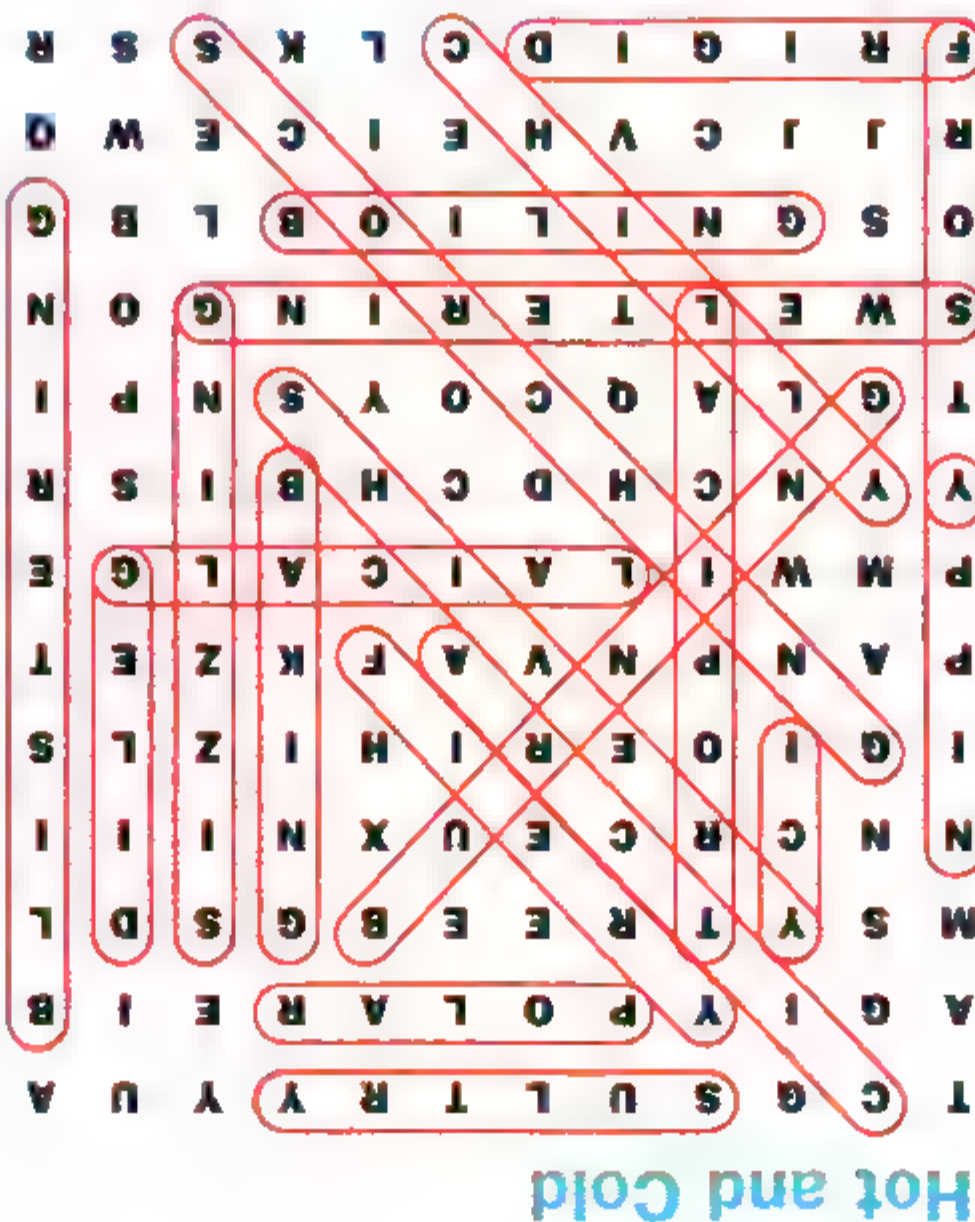
Freeze

Follow

Follow

Answer Box

Fuzzy Math: 1. 13 stripes + 50 stars; 2. 5 vowels + 21 consonants; 3. 8 fingers + 2 thumbs; 4. 2 pints + 3 quarts.
AG Code: Freeze a jolly good fellow!
Buzzwords: Nerve appears on page 4; Kismet appears on page 1.



Belly Laughs: 1G; 2C; 3F; 4D; 5E; 6I; 7H; 8A; 9B.
Wacky Hollywords: 1. The Black Stallion; 2. The Little Mermaid; 3. Doctor Dolittle; 4. The Lion King; 5. Robin Hood; 6. Stuart Little; 7. Alice in Wonderland; 8. The Neverending Story; 9. Star Wars.



Carrie. Carrie who? Carrie our sled up the hill!

Doris. Doris who? Doris locked and it's freezing out here!

Willa. Willa who? Willa you please stop them knock, knock jokes?

Alison. Alison who? Alison to the weather station. They said that there's a blizzard coming!

Knock, knock! Who's there?

Anna. Anna who? Anna body know where my ice skates are?

Yvonne. Yvonne who? Yvonne to hit the ski slopes?

HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I have problems dealing with my brothers. One is five and the other is nine. I'm eight, and I'm in the middle. It's hard because my big brother pinches me, and my little brother gets me in trouble with my parents. It's not fair! Who needs Brothers?

Not getting along can be a bad habit. To break it, have some fun with each of your brothers. Play games, do puzzles, or just hang out. Try to get into the habit of getting along. But when they do bug you, ask yourself if getting upset is worth it. If they're hurting you, tell your parents. If not, your brothers may enjoy watching you get steamed. If you let their annoying habits slide, you'll be happier—and so will your parents.



Dear American Girl,

I really want a pen pal, but I don't know how to get one. I tried the Internet, but my mom and I both think it's too dangerous. Please help me.
Pen Pal, Please



You're right—the Internet is too dangerous a place to find a pen pal. But that doesn't mean there isn't a safe way to find one. Ask your parents whether you have a distant cousin you can write to. That way, you'll have a pen pal and learn more about your family!



Dear American Girl,

My teacher picks our groups for projects such as science experiments. I always end up with people who know I'm smart and who won't do their work. Then I do everything, because I don't want to fail. What should I do?

Not Fair

Instead of letting the other kids take advantage of you, try taking charge of the group. Don't just

assume that everyone will do her fair share—come up with a detailed plan. Ask the other kids what part of the project they'd like to do, divide up the work, and agree on deadlines for getting it done. If they still won't do the work, talk to your teacher.



Dear American Girl,

I promised my best friend that I'd sleep over at her house on Friday night. Then I got invited to a sleepover party for that same night. I really want to go to the party, but my friend is looking forward to having me over. I don't know what to tell her.

Unsure

Tell your friend you're looking forward to coming over to her house, because that's where you should go Friday night. It's really rude to cancel plans with a friend just because something more fun comes along. Imagine how you would feel if she did the same to you. Don't break your promise to your best friend and risk your friendship just for a party.

MORE HELP!

I'm afraid to ask for presents this Christmas.



Dear American Girl,

I'm afraid to ask for presents this Christmas. We just bought a new house and it cost a lot of money. Mom said she wasn't going to buy me as many presents, but she asked me to make a list. I didn't put what I really would have liked on the list because it was expensive. Should I tell her?

Christmas blues

Getting presents is a fun part of Christmas, but it's not the most important part. Since you already gave your mom a list, don't add anything to it now. Instead, save your own money toward the things you want. This Christmas, spend time with your family and focus on what you do have. Your holidays will still be full of happiness, even without expensive gifts.



Dear American Girl,

I'm on the Internet all the time. I've noticed a big change in my grades at school. Should I get rid of my Instant Messaging and fun on the computer for good?
CYBER FREAK!

Computers are fun, but it's easy to lose track of how much time you're spending online. Have you tried setting limits on your computer time? Make rules for yourself, such as no computer time until after homework is done, and only half an hour of computer time on weeknights. Set a timer so you know when time's up. If you find you're cheating on your rules, talk to your parents. It might be easier to avoid the computer altogether until your grades improve.



Dear American Girl,

I might be getting braces next year, and I don't know if they will hurt or not. I'm kind of scared. Will they hurt?
Brace Face

Braces can make you uncomfortable for a little while, but once you get used to them, they usually don't hurt. Not knowing what to expect is what's really scary, so talk to your orthodontist about what she's going to do. Also, ask your friends with braces what it was like for them. Talking to someone who's been through it should make you feel better.



Advice from You

"If you're playing a sport and some boys are making fun of you, saying things like, 'You play like a girl!' you can say 'thank you!' because there are a lot of good female sports players out there."

Sarah L.

Age 12, Rhode Island

Need advice? Got advice? Write: Help!

AmericanGirl

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Take a
Cool Quiz

Make Holiday
Crafts

Throw a
New Year's
Party



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A friendship story that's sure to warm your heart.

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22 Up All Night!

Fun party ideas to help you celebrate New Year's Eve

Plus: AG Iron-Ons

Make a cute pillowcase with dreamy designs.

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Holiday Craft Bazaar

Quick and cute crafts to make and sell

4



Winter Wonders

Are you the holiday expert in your family? Take this quiz to find out.

10



Hooked on Hilary

Hilary Duff talks to us about her new holiday movie, work, and friends.

20

Girls Express



Buzzword

American girls everywhere will be using this buzzword this season:

verve

How to say it: VURV

What it means: spirit and enthusiasm, especially in writing or performing

Where it comes from: *verbum*, the Latin term for "word"

One way to use it: "Even though she didn't get the lead role in *The Nutcracker*, Celia performed her part with verve."



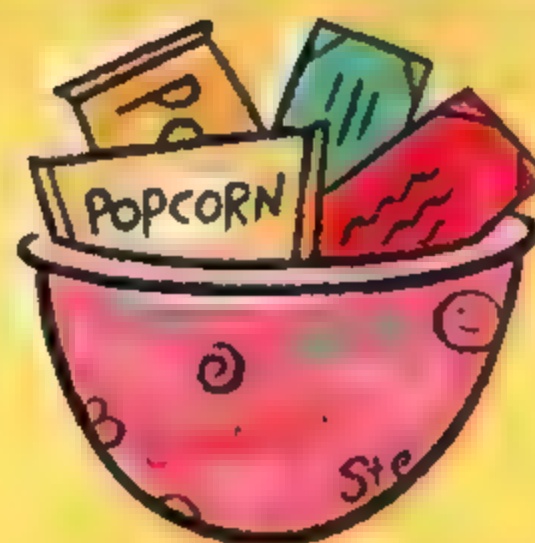
The buzzword is tucked somewhere into this issue of AG. Can you find it? Answer is on page 20.

Teacher Treasures

Readers share ideas for holiday gifts sure to make the grade!

"We gave our teacher a special popcorn bowl.

We painted it at a ceramics store, and every kid in class signed it. We filled it with microwave popcorn and movie rental gift certificates. She loved it!"



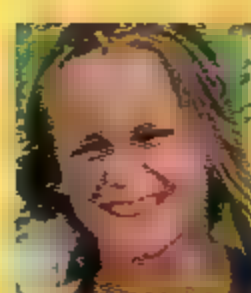
Danielle S.
Age 9, Wisconsin

"We made our teacher a cookbook with one favorite recipe from each student in our class. We put the recipes in a scrapbook binder."



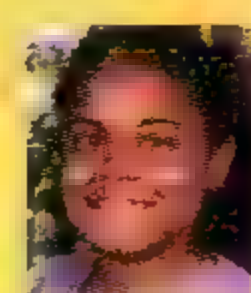
Valerie H.
Age 10, Arizona

"Write a poem in your best handwriting about how much you love your teacher teaching you. You can put the poem in a frame."



Michaela L.
Age 14, New Hampshire

"For gym teachers, buy a basketball or soccer ball and have everyone in your class sign it. Then your teacher will always remember you."



Rachel W.
Age 10, Pennsylvania





Shining Star

For Kaela L., 13, Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without a tree. That's why the Alaskan girl started Trees for Tots, a program that collects Christmas trees and decorations and distributes them to families who can't afford them.



Kaela loves giving trees away. "Once we had a donated tree that was probably about a foot and a half tall," she recalls. "It was tiny! I was almost embarrassed to give it to somebody, but we took it to the Salvation Army to give it away. A man saw the tiny tree, and he came up to me and thanked me. He said, 'My house just burned down, and my family had to move into our camper. I told my kids we weren't going to have a Christmas tree this year, but now we can have one!'" Kaela knows that even a small act of kindness can create a big smile.

You can shine, too.

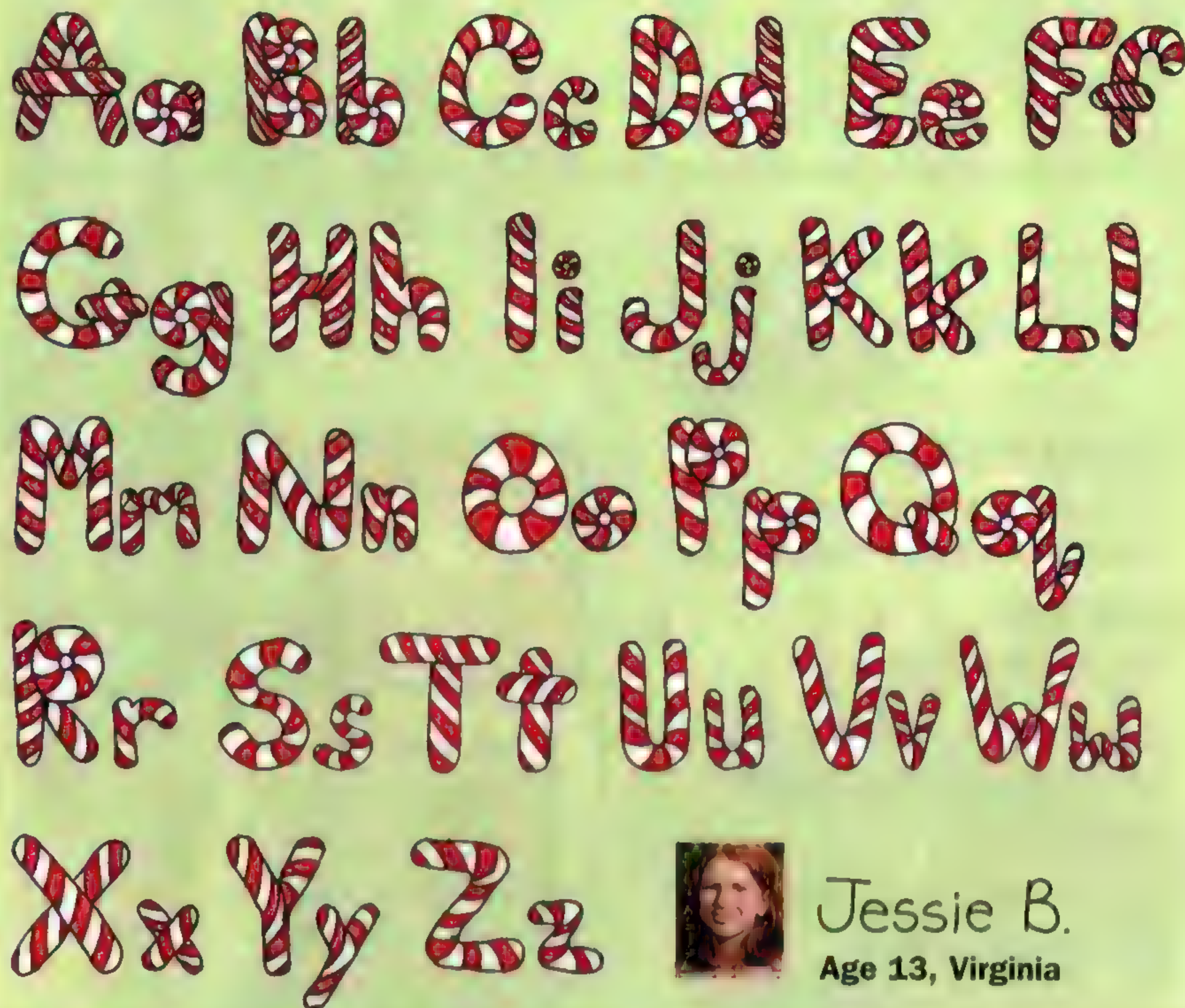
Trees for Tots started when Kaela wondered, "If someone can't afford Christmas dinner or presents, how can they afford a Christmas tree?" If you and your family donate food and gifts to a needy family at holiday time, add a tree or some holiday decorations to your gift this year.

Mint Magic

Add a pinch of peppermint to your holiday fun!

Sweet Stripes

Decorate holiday cards with these peppermint letters sent in by a reader.



Jessie B.
Age 13, Virginia

Chocomint Float

Share this tasty treat with a friend. Fill a mug a little more than halfway with hot cocoa. Add a scoop of peppermint ice cream, and top with whipped cream and candy.



Minty Melts



These cute candies make great gifts.

Cover a baking sheet with foil. Thoroughly coat a metal cookie cutter with nonstick cooking spray. Place cookie cutter on baking sheet. Unwrap several round peppermints and arrange them inside the cookie cutter. Ask an adult to place pan in an oven preheated to 325 degrees. Bake for 6 to 7 minutes. Let cool. Carefully pop out the candy shapes.



Share the Cheer

This year, why not give a gift that makes a real difference?



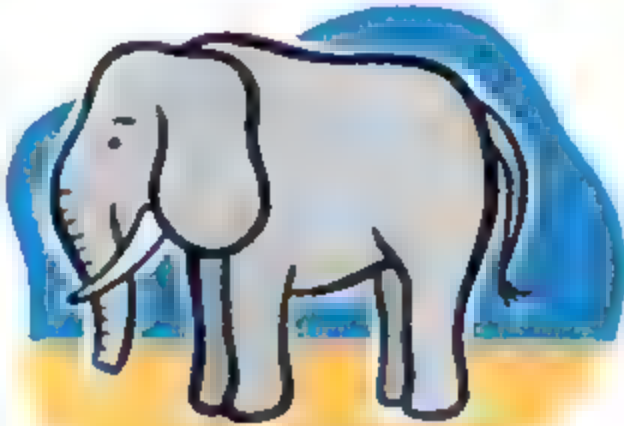
Every dollar you donate to Second Harvest buys 28 pounds of food and provides 21 meals!

A \$9 donation to the Humane Society of the United States pays for vaccinations for one cat or dog.



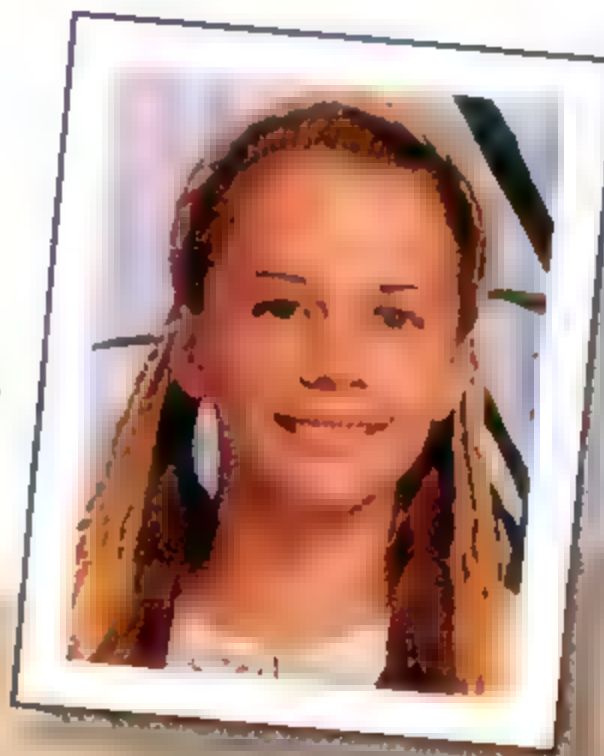
A \$5 to \$10 donation to Toys for Tots will buy a gift and fulfill a Christmas dream for one of the nation's neediest children.

A \$10 gift to the World Wildlife Fund pays for a guard to protect endangered animals in Asia from poachers for two weeks.



True Story

Elizaveta K. made it home for the holidays—but only after she was stuck in Russia for a few months!



Dear American Girl,

In June of 2002, I went to Russia to visit my grandparents. I had a great time. I had lived in Russia with my mom for 10 years before we moved to New York. I was supposed to return home in September, but something went wrong with my travel documents, and I had to stay in Russia with my grandparents.

Since it took a long time for my parents to solve the problem with my travel papers from 8,000 miles away, I started school in Russia with all my best friends there. I was the best English-speaking student in my Russian 6th-grade class! But I missed my parents a lot, and I really wanted to come home.

Finally, on December 12 (my birthday!), I got to come home. I hadn't seen my parents for nearly 6 months! I was so happy to be home in time for Christmas. My story was in the newspapers, so I was kind of a celebrity for a short time. That was cool, but there really is no place better than home!

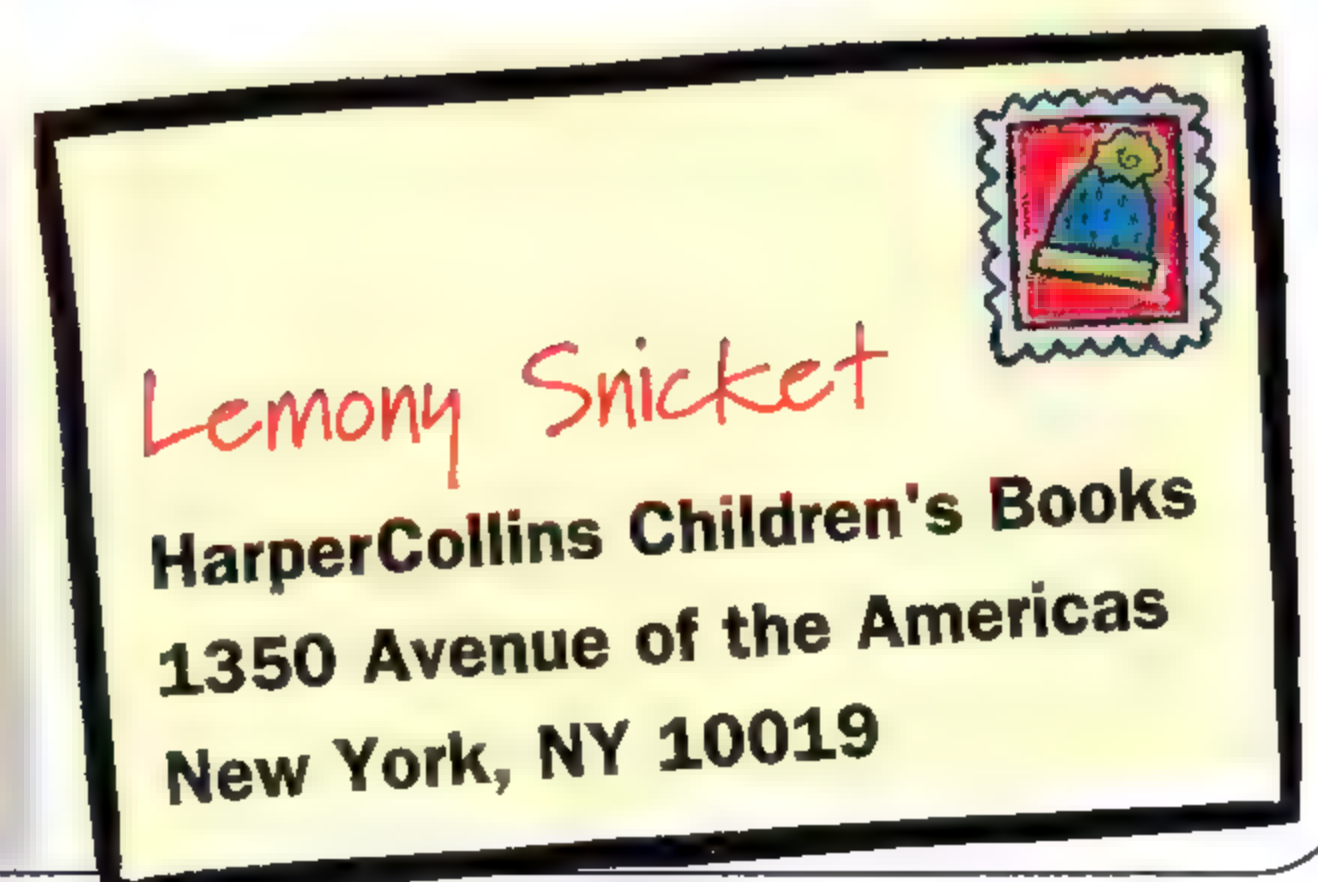
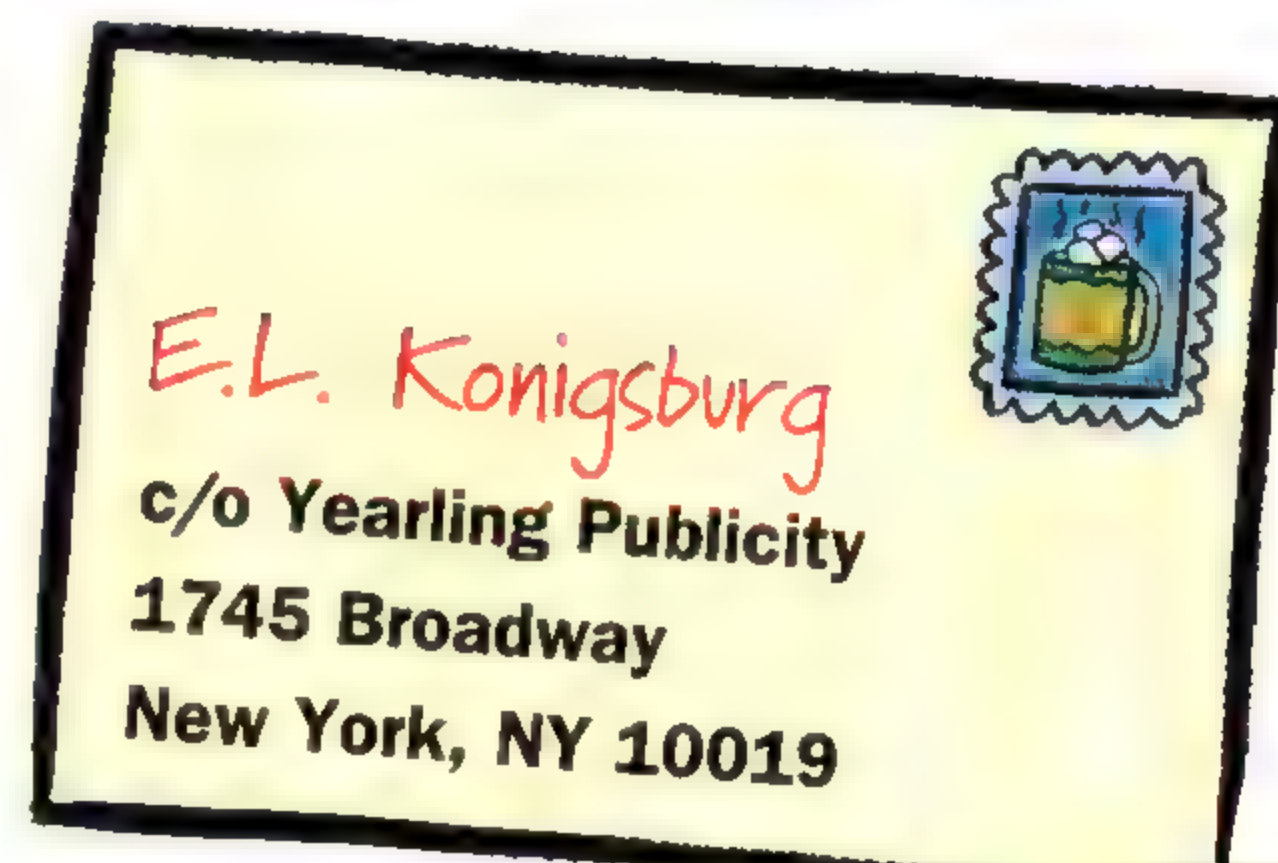
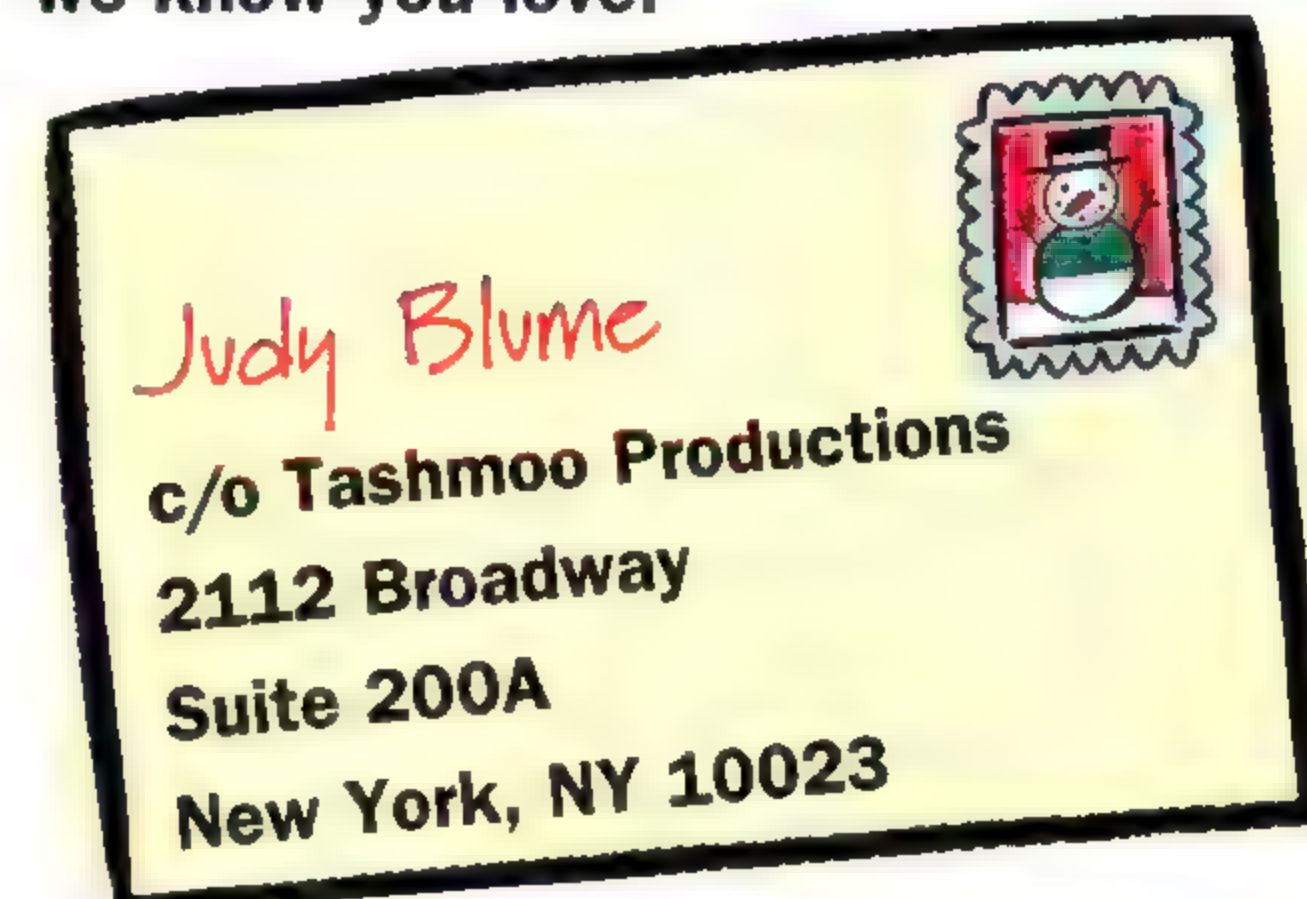
Sincerely,

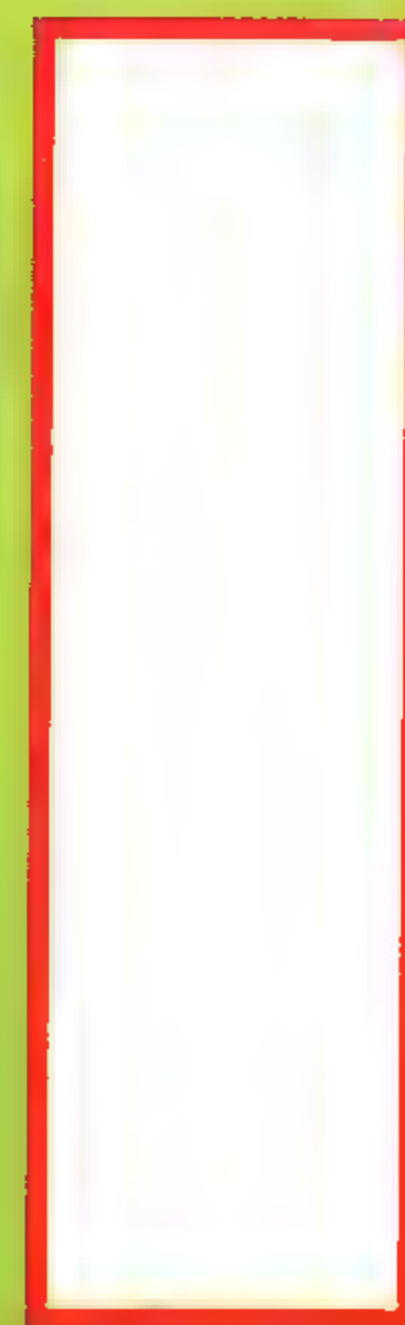
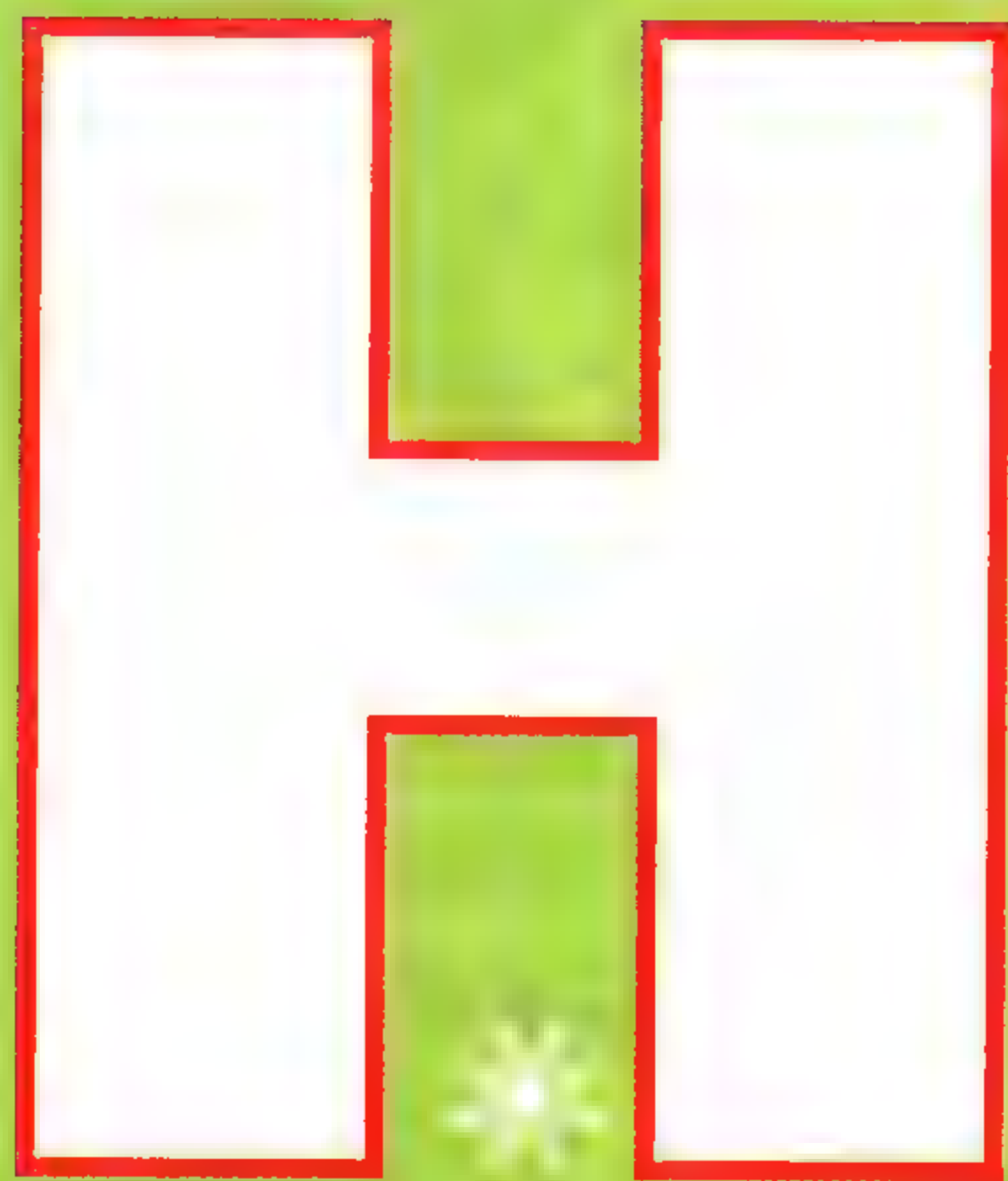
Elizaveta K.
Age 12 New York



The Write Stuff

This time of year is jam-packed with holidays, including Authors' Day on November 1. To celebrate this special day for writers, send a fan letter to *your* favorite author. Here are the addresses for a few we know you love:





'Tis the season to get creative and make a little money, too! Try these projects and use these tips to make your craft sale a super success.

Location, Location!

The first step is to find a place to sell your crafts.

- See if a local church or community center is having a holiday bazaar. If so, ask a parent to help you find out how you could set up a table.
- Have your own holiday sale. Ask your parents if you can have it at your house. Invite neighbors you know to shop at your sale.



- Ask your principal if your school can have a craft fair. Or, if you have a school store, ask if you can set up some of your crafts there.

Supply Spotter

The next step is to make the crafts. Here is a list of where to find supplies:

- Craft and fabric stores for general craft supplies
- Scrapbook stores for patterned papers, blank greeting cards, paper tags, punches
- Discount and party stores for tea lights, gift bags, bows, votives



day

Craft Bazaar

Terrific Tags

Decorate a paper tag with cute paper. Add confetti shapes. Use dabs of jewel glue to attach confetti to the tag. Tie on a ribbon for hanging.

Display tip: Wrap an empty box and attach your hand-made tag.

Cost: \$.25
Sell: \$.75
Profit: \$.50

Jingle Bags

Punch 6 holes through the top of a gift bag with a hole punch. Thread a pipe cleaner through the holes, adding jingle bells along the way. Twist ends of pipe cleaner to hold in place.

Cost: \$1.00
Sell: \$2.50
Profit: \$1.50





Cute Cards

Use a triangle paper punch to punch different colors of paper. Glue paper triangles onto a card in tree designs as shown. Use a black marker to draw tree trunks. Don't forget to add a little design to the envelope, too!

Cost: \$.50
Selling Price: \$1.00
Profit: \$.50



Ring Dings

String beads and a jingle bell onto an 8-inch piece of elastic cord. Tie a double knot. Add a dab of glue on the knot for extra hold. Let dry. Sell rings in sets of four.

Display tip! Show napkin rings on brightly colored napkins.

Cost: \$1.25
for set of 4
Selling Price: \$3.00
Profit: \$1.75



Nifty Gifts

To make these magnets, brush Mod Podge onto the top of a wooden square. Stick the square onto the back of festive wrapping paper. Let dry. Trim excess paper. Glue a magnet to the back. Let dry. Cut the paper tag off of a mini bow and glue on top of the square.

Display tip! Place gift magnets on a clean metal cookie pan. Prop pan up so customers can see their choices.

Cost: \$.50
Selling Price: \$1.00
Profit: \$.50





Sales Tips

So, your crafty creations are as cute as can be—now read these tips on selling like a star!

- Jazz up your table by covering it with a solid-colored tablecloth.
- Make a colorful sign calling attention to your table.
- If there is an outlet nearby, plug in a set of twinkle lights for a holiday glow.
- Place a bowl of peppermint candies on your table.
- Be sure to have plenty of change. Start with 20 single dollar bills and lots of coin change when you begin your sale.
- Smile! A glowing grin will be sure to help you sell your crafts with verve.

Marble Swirl



Ask an adult to carefully remove the metal hanger from a clear glass ornament. Squeeze equal parts colored acrylic paint and white acrylic paint into the ornament. Put a wad of paper towel over the opening and shake the ornament until paint covers the inside. Remove paper towel. Set the ornament upside down in a paper cup, and let the remaining paint drip out. Let dry completely. Ask an adult to carefully place the hanger back on the ball. Tie on a ribbon for hanging.

Cost: \$2.00
Selling Price: \$4.00
Profit: \$2.00

Disco Ornament

Cover a 1½-inch or 2-inch Styrofoam ball with acrylic paint. Let dry. Thread shaped sequins onto stick pins with beaded ends. Carefully push the pins with sequins into the ball. For polka dots, add stick pins without sequins. To attach ribbon, push a pin through the ribbon, add a dab of glue to the end of the pin and push into the ball. Let dry.

Cost: \$.75
Selling Price: \$1.50
Profit: \$.75





Glittery Glow

Attach rows of glitter-dot tape to a glass votive (glittery stickers also work well). Add a tea light.

Cost: \$1.50
Sell: \$3.00
Profit: \$1.50

Bright Bookmarks

Use jewel glue to attach cute confetti and sequins to a colored craft stick. Glue a 10-inch piece of ribbon to the back of the craft stick. Let dry. Brush a little glue on each ribbon end to prevent fraying ends. Let dry.

Display tip! Place a few bookmarks in an open book.



Cost: \$.25
Sell: \$1.00
Profit: \$.75



Clever Coasters

Cover one side of a large wooden shape with Mod Podge. Attach small pieces of tissue paper and let dry. Finish with a coat of Mod Podge. Let dry. Glue small cork pieces to the back of the coaster. Let dry. Sell in sets of four.

Cost: \$2.00
for set of 4
Sell: \$3.50
Profit: \$1.50



Photo Clip

Paint a wooden shape and a clothespin with acrylic paint. Let dry. Glue the shape onto the clothespin so it stands upright. Let dry. Decorate with rhinestones.

Display tip! Put a photo in a clip so customers can see how it works.

Cost: \$1.00
Sell: \$2.00
Profit: \$1.00



Tiny Gifts

Paint a wooden cube with acrylic paint. Let dry. Wrap a thin ribbon around the cube and tie it in a bow. Thread cord under the bow on top of the gift to hang.

Display tip! Lay an artificial tree branch on your table. Hang ornaments from the branch.

Cost: \$.75
Sell: \$1.50
Profit: \$.75



The Perfect Price

Here are some tips on the best way to price your creations so that you'll make money.

- Figure out what it costs to make the item. Add in the cost of all the materials you used for the craft.
- Whatever the cost of materials, make sure you add to get the minimum price you should ask. Follow our guide here and you won't lose money, but keep in mind that prices for supplies are different from store to store.
- Make sure your prices are fair. If you ask too much, no one will buy your crafts. If you ask too little, you won't make a profit.
- If you have any crafts left over from the sale, save them for holiday presents or donate them to a nursing home.



Winter Wonders

Take this quiz and see if you can answer these holiday-season stumpers.

First of All

Of the two things listed, which do you think came first?

1. Candy canes or peppermint?

2. Ice cream or hot chocolate?

3. Christmas trees or presents?

4. Christmas or winter?

Higher or Lower

The numbers in the following statements are wrong. Is the actual number higher or lower?

5. The fastest snowmobile ever measured was 240 miles per hour — or less than a yardstick.

6. The fastest programmed hovercraft ever measured was 200 feet tall — or less than a football field.

7. The world's largest snowman was 120 feet tall — or less than a 20-story building.

The world's largest Christmas card, made in Ireland in 1990, was as big as 4,500 regular cards put together!

True or False

Guess if the following statements are true or false!

8. There was

no pumpkin pie

served at the

first Thanksgiving.

9. The carol "Jingle Bells"

was originally called

"Ring-a-Ding."



10. The first candy canes had polka dots, not stripes.

11. The first snowboard

was called a "sno-bo."



Answers

1. **Gingerbread.** In the eleventh

century, gingerbread was so

popular, Western European

towns held gingerbread

fairs. People weren't

hooked on candy canes

until 1670.

2. **Mittens.** The hand warmers

started keeping fingers toasty

10,000 years ago. It wasn't until

1873 that earmuffs started pro-

tecting ears from wicked weather.

3. **Electric holiday lights.**

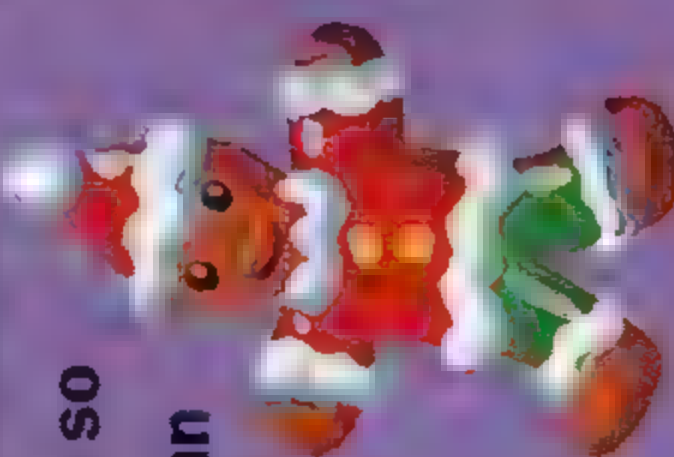
In the late 1800s, electric lights

added a colorful glow to many

Christmas trees. Electric blankets

didn't soothe shivering sleepers

until the 1930s.



4. **Ice skates.** Ice skates with

bone blades glided onto the

scene in 3000 B.C. Skis helped

Scandinavians slide over snow

about 500 years later.



5. **Lower.** The biggest snowflake

measured was 15 inches wide.

It could cover your whole face!

6. **Higher.** It took 2,200 sheets of

gingerbread, 800 pounds of choco-

late, 550 pounds of candy, and 75

pounds of colored popcorn to create

the world's biggest gingerbread

house, which was 52 feet tall!

7. **Heater.** The

world's biggest

snowman measured 133 feet.

It didn't melt until nearly four

months after it was built!



8. **True.** Native Americans and

Pilgrims enjoyed quite a feast, but

there was no pumpkin pie because

there was no flour for pie crust.

They settled for boiled pumpkin

instead.

9. **False.** The classic song

"Jingle Bells" was actually written

for Thanksgiving time and was first


called "One-Horse Open Sleigh."

10. **False.** The first candy

canes didn't have polka dots or

stripes. They were just white.





Two girls from very different worlds find out what it *really* means to be best friends.

When it came to ice-skating, Shoshanna could spin circles around other fifth graders. She could glide with one leg extended behind her. And she could push-pull backward more gracefully than most kids could skate forward.

Shoshanna had never taken one lesson. “Too expensive,” her parents always said. Ever since her twin brothers were born and her dad had been laid off from his job, money had been tight.

That’s why Shoshanna was lucky that ice-skating came naturally to her. Her ankles itched to do it. Every fall, she would count the days until the rink near her apartment building in New York City would open its doors.

Lasker Rink, located in Central Park, was free. The only expense was renting skates. That used to be a major headache because Shoshanna would have to beg her parents for rental money. Then, last November, everything changed.

The *New York Post* announced a winter contest. It invited all New York City kids to write a short essay about why they loved ice-skating. The prize? Tickets to an ice show and a pair of brand-new ice skates. Shoshanna worked for five days on her essay. The first line was: *Ice-skating is better than Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Ramadan all squished into a big box tied up with a bow.* She went on to say how great it is that kids from every background can enjoy ice-skating together.

When the man from the *Post* called, he said, “I’m delighted to tell you that you’re our grand-prize

FRIENDS ON THIN Ice

by Carolyn Mackler

winner!" Shoshanna almost croaked. She couldn't believe that she had won!



The contest had been over a year ago, but those skates were still Shoshanna's most treasured possession. Lasker Rink had been open for three weeks now and Shoshanna had been skating as much as possible. Now that she was ten, she could walk to the rink all by herself.

The truth is, Shoshanna usually did go to the rink alone. Her best friend, Gemma, had tried skating only once and had hated it so much that she quit after five minutes. "You couldn't pay me to put on a pair of skates again," Gemma said. Not that she needed the money.

Gemma had been Shoshanna's best friend since first grade. That was when Gemma and her mom moved into the apartment building at the end of Shoshanna's block. The girls weren't in the same class because Shoshanna went to a neighborhood public school and Gemma went to an expensive private school.

Sometimes Shoshanna got jealous of everything Gemma had—the hardcover books and the laptop computer and all the outfits that hadn't even been worn. Gemma was always generous about treating Shoshanna when they went somewhere. But even so, Shoshanna would get this angry feeling inside of her. Sort of like the itch that made her want to skate. Except the skating itch was good and the anger itch definitely felt bad.

Gemma couldn't help being rich. Just like how she couldn't help that her dad moved to Chicago when she was two. And how she couldn't help that her mom traveled all over the world for her

job. Gemma's mom worked hard to give the two of them a nice life. Gemma was proud of her mom's high-powered career, but she still wished that her mom could join her class on field trips and help her with book reports. Those were the kinds of things Shoshanna's mom did.

Shoshanna was always saying things like, "You're so lucky, Gemma. You have everything a girl could want!" But Gemma thought it was Shoshanna who had it better. Sure, Gemma got a hefty allowance and Shoshanna didn't. But Shoshanna had her family around all the time. And, of course, she had ice-skating.

Gemma knew she should be proud of her best friend's talent, but secretly she was jealous. Back in third grade, Shoshanna convinced Gemma to come skating with her. It was a disaster. As soon as they stepped on the ice, Gemma slammed onto her butt. "You'll get the hang of it in no time," Shoshanna said as she hoisted Gemma up, but a moment later Gemma smacked down again. And again. And again. Finally, Gemma clutched the side wall, inched her way to a bench, and vowed she'd never set a blade onto ice again.



On Friday, December 19, school let out for vacation. Shoshanna skipped down the block to Gemma's building. As she entered the marble lobby, Gemma's doorman said, "Hi, Shoshanna!" The blue-haired lady with the white poodle said, "Hi, Shoshanna!" The elevator operator said, "Hi, Shoshanna!"



Shoshanna hung out at Gemma's apartment so much that people often thought she lived there. Gemma's apartment was roomy and peaceful, and the cupboards were stocked with the best snack foods. In contrast, Shoshanna's apartment was cramped and noisy. Her twin brothers were either having temper tantrums or blasting *Barney*. And you couldn't walk around barefoot without crunching your toes on a stray Cheerio.

Shoshanna knocked on the door to Gemma's apartment. Frances answered. Officially, Frances was the housekeeper, but she was really like a grandma, a cook, and a tutor all put together. She lived in Gemma's apartment. That was because Gemma's mom was away for work so much.

Frances ushered Shoshanna into the apartment. It smelled like cookies. Shoshanna could

hear "Jingle Bells" playing in the background. She headed into the living room, where Gemma was dripping silver tinsel onto a seven-foot-tall Christmas tree.

"Hey, Shosh," Gemma said. "Come help!" Shoshanna tossed her coat onto a chair. The girls began twirling around the living room, laughing as they flung tinsel onto the tree.

A few minutes later, Frances came into the room with a plate of gingerbread cookies fresh from the oven. Both girls flopped onto the couch.

"Want to do Girl Day next Wednesday?" Gemma asked as she licked the sugar granules off her lips.

Shoshanna counted with her fingers. "That's Christmas Eve day. Are you sure you'll be free?"

Gemma shrugged. "I think so."

"Sounds good to me, then."

Gemma celebrated Christmas and Shoshanna celebrated Hanukkah. Every year, rather than exchanging presents, Shoshanna and Gemma planned a special event to celebrate the holidays. They called it Girl Day. One year, Gemma brought Shoshanna to a beauty salon, where she paid for them both to get professional manicures. Another year, Gemma hired a horse and carriage to take them for a ride through Central Park.

"I was thinking we could go to Serendipity for lunch," Gemma said. "Frances could get a car service to take us there and pick us up, so we could go all by ourselves."

Shoshanna didn't say anything. Serendipity was an expensive restaurant near Gemma's school. Shoshanna had never been there, but she'd heard Gemma rave





about it. Serendipity was famous for their Frozen Hot Chocolate, which was a cold, slushy cocoa concoction topped with mounds of whipped cream and shavings of chocolate.

Gemma noticed Shoshanna's silence. "It would be my treat, of course," Gemma said. "My mom gave me extra allowance before she left for Japan."

Shoshanna picked a thread of tinsel out of Gemma's hair. "What about if we went ice-skating instead? Lasker Rink is free, so no one would have to treat anyone to anything."

"Shosh," Gemma said, "you know I don't skate."
"Maybe you'd like it if you tried again."

Shoshanna was feeling that bad itch inside, so she knew she'd better keep her mouth shut.

Gemma shook her head. "No way."

Shoshanna wrapped the tinsel around her finger. Then she rolled it off, squished it into a wad, and flicked it across the couch.

"What's the matter? Why aren't you saying anything?" Gemma asked.

Shoshanna mashed her lips together. She was feeling that bad itch inside, so she knew she'd better keep her mouth shut.

That night, Shoshanna's family lit the first candle of Hanukkah. Shoshanna was hoping her parents would give her money as a present. That way, she could agree to go to Serendipity next Wednesday and pay for her own Frozen Hot Chocolate.

But when it came time for gifts, Shoshanna's mom glanced at Shoshanna's dad, who sighed heavily and said, "How about we give you your Hanukkah present next week?"

Shoshanna knew what that meant. They'd already spent his unemployment check, so she'd have to wait until the new one arrived. Shoshanna felt sad for her parents and disappointed for herself. But mostly she felt angry at Gemma for suggesting they plan a Girl Day that involved money that Shoshanna simply didn't have.



On Saturday morning, Gemma's mom called from Japan. "Hey, Gem," she said wearily.



Gemma could tell right away that her mom was calling with bad news. She was in Tokyo putting together a major deal. Before she left, she had warned Gemma that negotiations could go right up until Christmas Day.

"Because all you want to do is ice-skate and you know I can't do that."

"But you haven't tried in two years," Shoshanna said. "Maybe it would be better this time. Besides, I'm your best friend and this is my favorite thing to do, so it's not fair that you won't even give it another try."

"Well, it's not fair that you won't come to

Shoshanna halted mid-sentence, lowered her voice, and said, "You just don't understand what it's like to be me."

"I'll be home on Thursday at noon," Gemma's mom said. "I'm catching the earliest flight I possibly can."

"You mean we'll miss having Christmas morning together?" Gemma asked.

"We'll do stockings and cinnamon buns and everything as soon as I walk in the door."

"But it won't be Christmas *morning*," Gemma said angrily.

Eight seconds after Gemma and her mom said good-bye, the phone rang again. Gemma assumed it was her mother, calling back to say that she'd switch around her meetings and make it home for Christmas morning.

"Mom?" Gemma asked.

"*Mom*?" Shoshanna laughed. "Is that how you answer the phone?"

Gemma knew that Shoshanna wasn't trying to be mean. But she was in a lousy mood, so she growled, "None of your business."

Shoshanna paused before saying, "Listen, I've been thinking. It's not fair that you always get to pick what we do for Girl Day. Why can't I pick what we do this year?"

Serendipity with me."

"But I don't have—" Shoshanna halted mid-sentence, lowered her voice, and said, "You just don't understand what it's like to be me."

"Well, you don't understand what it's like to be me, either!" Gemma shouted.

Shoshanna and Gemma both slammed down their phones at the exact same time.



Shoshanna and Gemma didn't talk all day Sunday.

Shoshanna hung out next door, at her elderly neighbors' apartment. They had a granddaughter visiting from Florida. Her name was Katie

and she was in fourth grade. Shoshanna spent the whole day with her, even though Katie picked her nose and chewed with her mouth open and, when they went to Lasker Rink, complained that the rental skates smelled like blue cheese.



Gemma also spent Sunday with someone else. It was a girl from school, over at her townhouse. All she wanted to do was try on her big sister's makeup and strut in front of the mirror, pretending to be a model. As

Gemma brushed on eye shadow and wiped off lipstick, she felt an ache inside for Shoshanna. Shoshanna would never make her do something this stupid.

Frances picked up Gemma in the late afternoon. As they walked through their marble lobby, the doorman asked, "Where's Shoshanna?" The blue-haired lady with the white poodle asked, "Where's Shoshanna?" The elevator operator asked, "Where's Shoshanna?"



If Gemma hadn't felt bad enough already, she felt worse now. She missed Shoshanna a lot. As soon as she unlaced her boots, she asked Frances to make a few phone calls. Then she arranged to do something she never thought she'd do.

By Tuesday, Shoshanna felt depressed. She was tired of hanging out with Katie, who'd spent that entire morning whining to her grandpa about how she'd tried on Shoshanna's ice skates and wanted him to buy her some just like them. He kept saying no, that she was returning to Florida in a week, so it just didn't make sense.

Shoshanna was also tired of reading to her twin brothers. The only book they would sit still for was *The Grouchy Ladybug*. But when it got to the part where the ladybug challenges someone to a duel, the twins would spew soggy Cheerios as they shrieked, "Hey, you! Wanna fight?" That would remind Shoshanna of fighting with Gemma, and then she'd get even more depressed.

So that evening—the night before their planned Girl Day—Shoshanna put her ice skates in a bag and did something she never thought she'd do.





On Wednesday morning, Shoshanna and Gemma hopped out of their beds and rushed through their cereal and orange juice. There had been a snowstorm the night before, so they both buttoned up their jackets and wound their scarves around their necks. Then they sprinted out their front doors, bursting with the news that they absolutely had to tell the other person.

They met on the sidewalk, halfway between their buildings. For a second, they both just stood there, pushing snow around with their boots.

Gemma was the first one to speak. "Happy Girl Day."

"Happy Girl Day," Shoshanna said.

"Are you ready to go ice-skating?" Gemma

asked, her face breaking into an enormous smile.

"What are you talking about?"

Gemma hopped up and down and clapped her hands together. "For the past two days, I've taken private ice-skating lessons at Chelsea Piers. I can make it once around the rink without crashing. You're not going to believe your eyes."



Shoshanna was too stunned for words. She stared at Gemma, her breath coming out in cloudy puffs.

"So?" Gemma asked. "Are you ready to go? Lasker Rink opens at ten. I looked it up on the Web."

"I can't," Shoshanna said.

Gemma frowned. "You really don't want to celebrate Girl Day with me?"

Shoshanna shook her head.

"No, that's not it. It's just...I don't have my ice skates anymore."

"What do you mean?" Gemma asked.

"I rented them to Katie, my neighbors' granddaughter. She has them until New Year's Day, when she goes back to Florida."

"Why did you do that?"

"Because I wanted to have enough money for Serendipity," said Shoshanna. "Now I can pay for my own lunch and Frozen Hot Chocolate."

Gemma started laughing and shaking her head.

"What?" Shoshanna asked. "Don't you want to go to Serendipity?"

"I can't," Gemma said.

"Why not?"

"I don't have enough money. I spent most of my

allowance on the private lessons. I only saved enough to rent ice skates for today."

Neither Shoshanna nor Gemma said a word. They just stood there, smiling at each other, realizing what they'd each done for their best friend.

"I have an idea," Shoshanna finally said. "Let's walk over to Central Park and build a snowman."

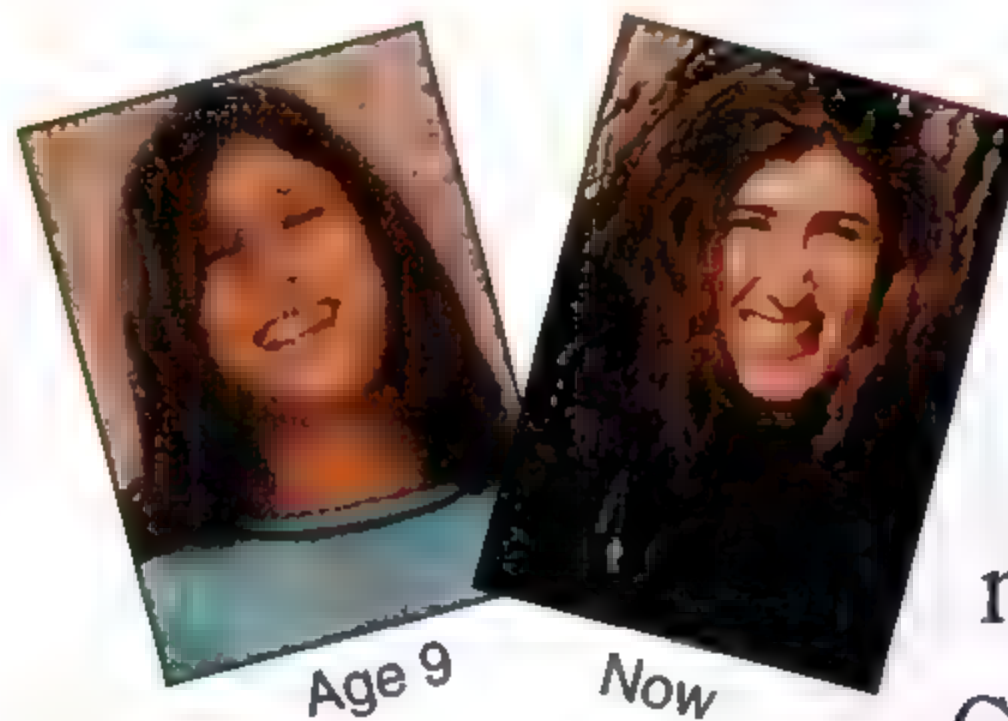
"Sounds good to me," Gemma said.

They linked elbows and began walking toward the park. After a moment, Gemma said, "Hold on. Today is Girl Day, so that means we should build..."

"...a snow GIRL!" they both shrieked at the exact same time. ★

Meet the Author

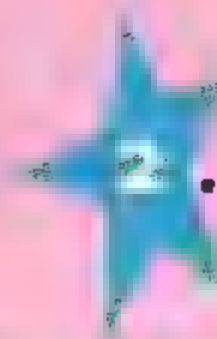
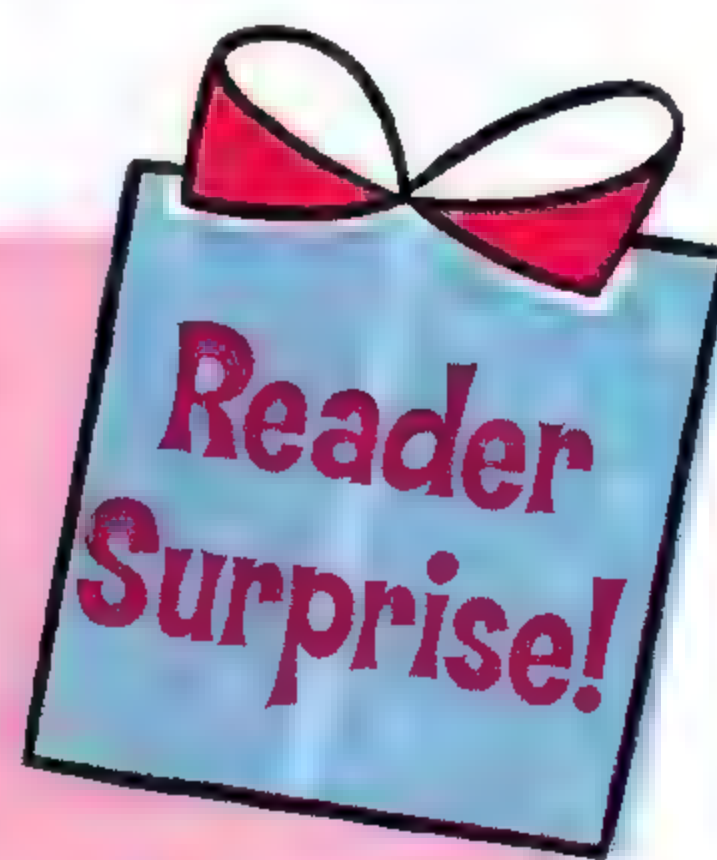
Carolyn Mackler



I grew up half and half—meaning that my dad's family celebrated Hanukkah and my mom's family celebrated Christmas. It was always interesting to invent our own holiday traditions!



Want to win
Frozen Hot
Chocolate
mix to share
with *your*
best friend?
Turn to page



Hooked on Hilary

Hilary Duff answers questions from AG readers and talks about life as a star, friends and family, and her new movie, *Cheaper by the Dozen*.

AG: Tell us about *Cheaper by the Dozen*.

Hilary: The movie's about a family of 12 kids, and it shows the struggles—and the good times—and how they all pull through in the end.

AG: What other actors did you work with?

Hilary: We had a really great cast—Steve Martin, Bonnie Hunt, Piper Perabo, Tom Welling, Ashton Kutcher, and a bunch of kids. It was fun filming because it was always crazy on set with all the kids.



Hilary with her huge new film family

AG: What character do you play?

Hilary: My character's name is Lorraine, and she's 16. She's into hair and makeup and clothes, kind of like Lizzie McGuire.

AG: How is Lorraine different from Lizzie?

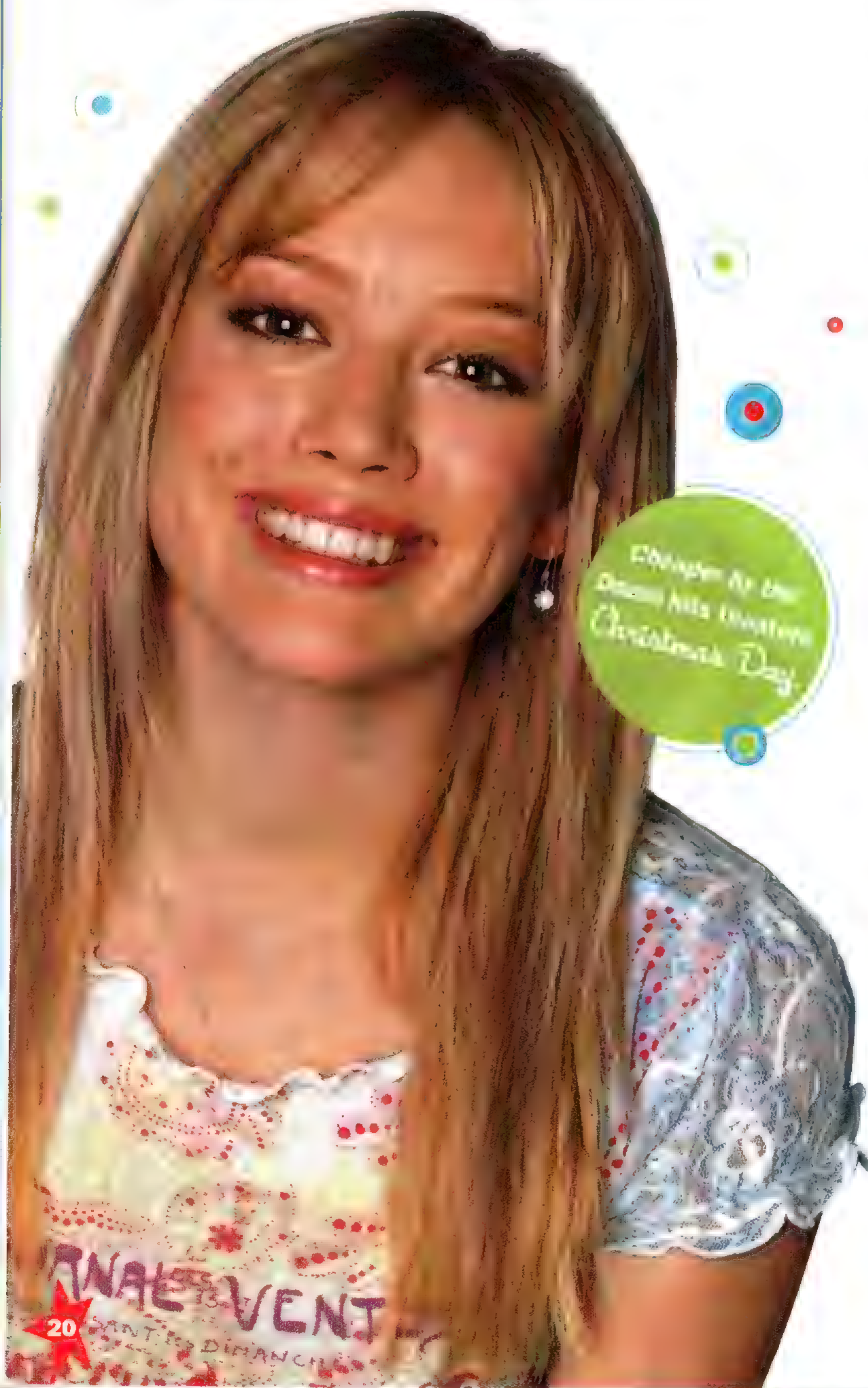
Hilary: Lizzie talks about how she doesn't necessarily fit in and how she's trying to find herself. Lorraine totally fits in. She's very popular.

AG: Did you base your relationship with your brothers and sisters in the movie on your relationship with Haylie, your real-life sister?

Hilary: No, not at all. Lorraine's not really nice to her brothers and sisters until the end of the movie. Haylie and I are best friends. We get along all the time. She gives me great advice, and I give her good advice, too.



Haylie, 18,
with Hilary, 16



Cheaper by the Dozen hits theaters Christmas Day.

Hilary's first single, "I Can't Wait," became a gold record last December. That means it sold more than 500,000 copies!

Hilary shares a scene with her movie dad, Steve Martin.



AG: How do you keep in touch with friends from home in Texas while you're working in California?

Hilary: My best girlfriend, Taylor, and I talk on the phone every day. I see her when I'm in Texas, and she comes to visit me every two months. This year she lived in California with us for almost three months. We had such a good time!

AG: What do you like best about working on movies and being an actress?

Hilary: I love getting to play different characters and put myself in other people's shoes. Sometimes it's really challenging for me, and I like that.



Cheaper by the Dozen is filled with funny family mishaps.

AG: You've been putting a lot of energy into your singing career lately. When did you start singing?

Hilary: I always sang when I was little. I used to take singing classes. About two years ago, my sister was in a girl group, and it looked like a lot of fun. I started wanting to be a singer. Then Aaron Carter came on *Lizzie McGuire*. My mom said, "Hilary, that looks like so much fun! If he can do that, you can do that." And I thought, "Yeah, I want to do it!" I really love singing.

AG: What advice do you have for girls who want to act or sing?

Hilary: You have to follow your dreams. You have to practice and work really hard, but it definitely pays off. If you want something, you've got to go after it, because anything can happen. ★

Duff Data

Her birthday: September 28

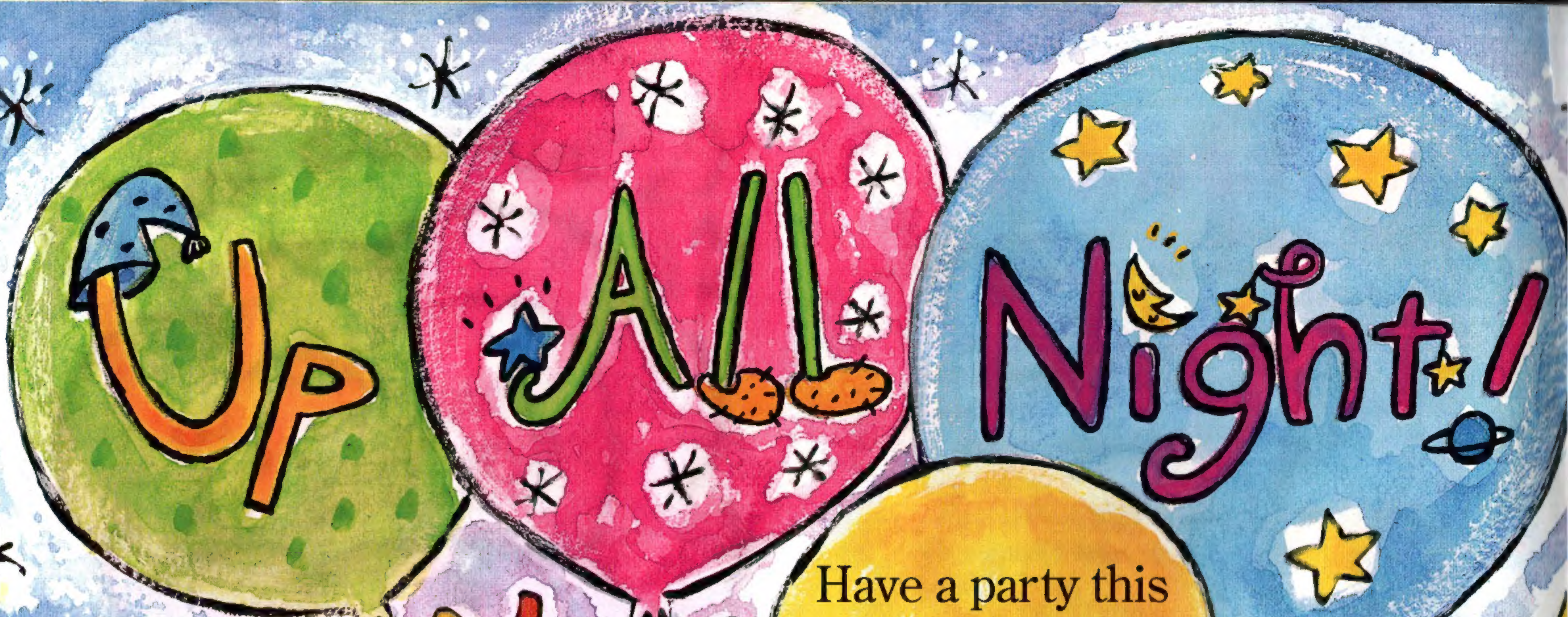
Her pet: A dog named Mimi

Her favorite color: "Today it's pink, but I don't know what it will be tomorrow."

Her best subject: Math

Her lucky number: "Sixteen, because I want to get my driver's license!"

Her favorite movie: *The Hot Chick*



Starry Night

At the beginning of the party, give each guest a helium balloon and a star cut from paper. Ask guests to write a hope or dream for the New Year on the star, and tie it to the balloon. Let the balloons float to the ceiling for decorations. Just before bed, cut off the stars one by one and read them out loud.



Have a party this New Year's Eve with friends, family, and lots of fun.

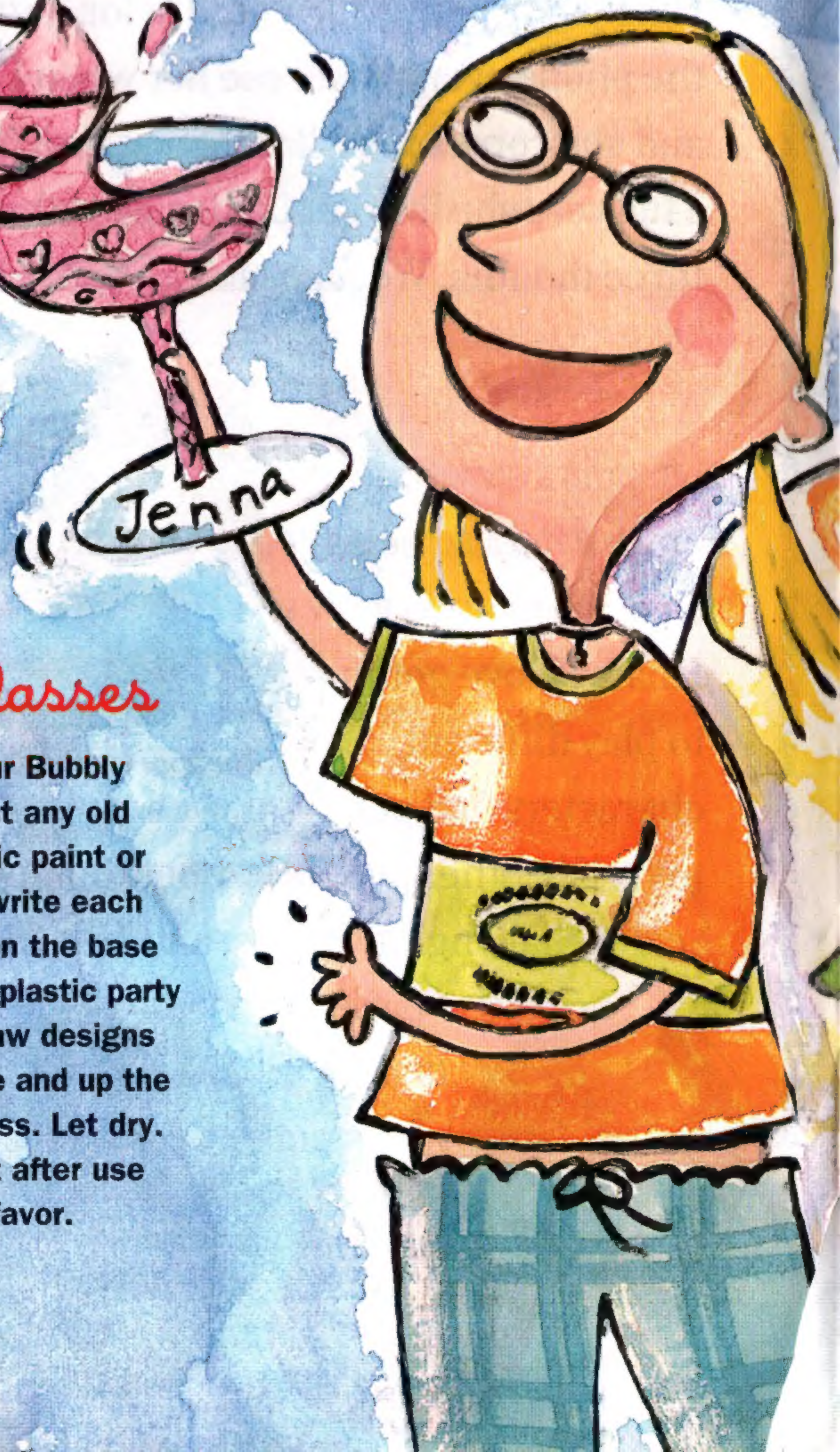


Great Glasses

Don't serve your Bubbly Beverage in just any old glass! Use fabric paint or glitter glue to write each guest's name on the base of a disposable plastic party drink glass. Draw designs around the base and up the stem of the glass. Let dry. Rinse glass out after use and keep as a favor.

Bubbly Beverage

Toast the New Year by sipping this sparkling drink. In a punch bowl, mix together fruit punch and lemon-lime soda to taste. Add club soda for extra fizz. Pour into Great Glasses.



Countdown Clock

Hide an alarm clock somewhere in the house. Set it to go off at the top of the hour after the party starts. When the alarm goes off, the first person to find it gets a prize. Then that person sets the clock for one hour ahead and hides it for another round. The game continues until the New Year arrives.

we l c o m e
2004!
The Best Year Ever!!

Shake It Up

Use mini M&M candy tubes to create New Year's noisemakers. Fill an empty tube $\frac{1}{4}$ full of unpopped popcorn kernels. With the lid open, place crepe paper streamers across the top. Close the lid to keep the streamers in place. Cover the tube with self-adhesive glitter paper. Shake, shake, shake!

Glow Crazy!

Give guests glow-in-the-dark bracelets and necklaces to wear, and decorate the room with glow-in-the-dark stars. Keep the lights low or off (except the TV) during the countdown, then flip on the lights at midnight!

Confetti Cookies

These are perfect for munching all through the night. Pour candy sprinkles onto paper plates. Spread frosting onto a colored vanilla wafer. Dip into sprinkles, then fill a platter with the colorful treats.



Balloon Ball

This game is a kick! One girl holds her hands above her head to make a goal. Set a balloon a few feet in front of her. Pick a player to try to kick the balloon through the goal. See who can kick the most goals.

Dance-a-thon

Pick partners and turn on some music. Each pair puts a balloon between their foreheads. Everyone dances (you have to keep moving!), keeping the balloon in place with no hands. Partners are out if they drop their balloon. The last team dancing wins.

Wobbly Waitress

Divide into two teams and line up. Give each team a tray and a pile of balloons. Set a timer for two minutes. On "go," the first person in each line loads the tray with the balloons and tries to carry them across the room to their team's goal (a chair works fine). She must hold the tray with two hands at all times. She dumps her balloons and goes back to give the tray to the next person on her team. When time is up, the team with the most balloons in their goal wins.

Knee Knocker

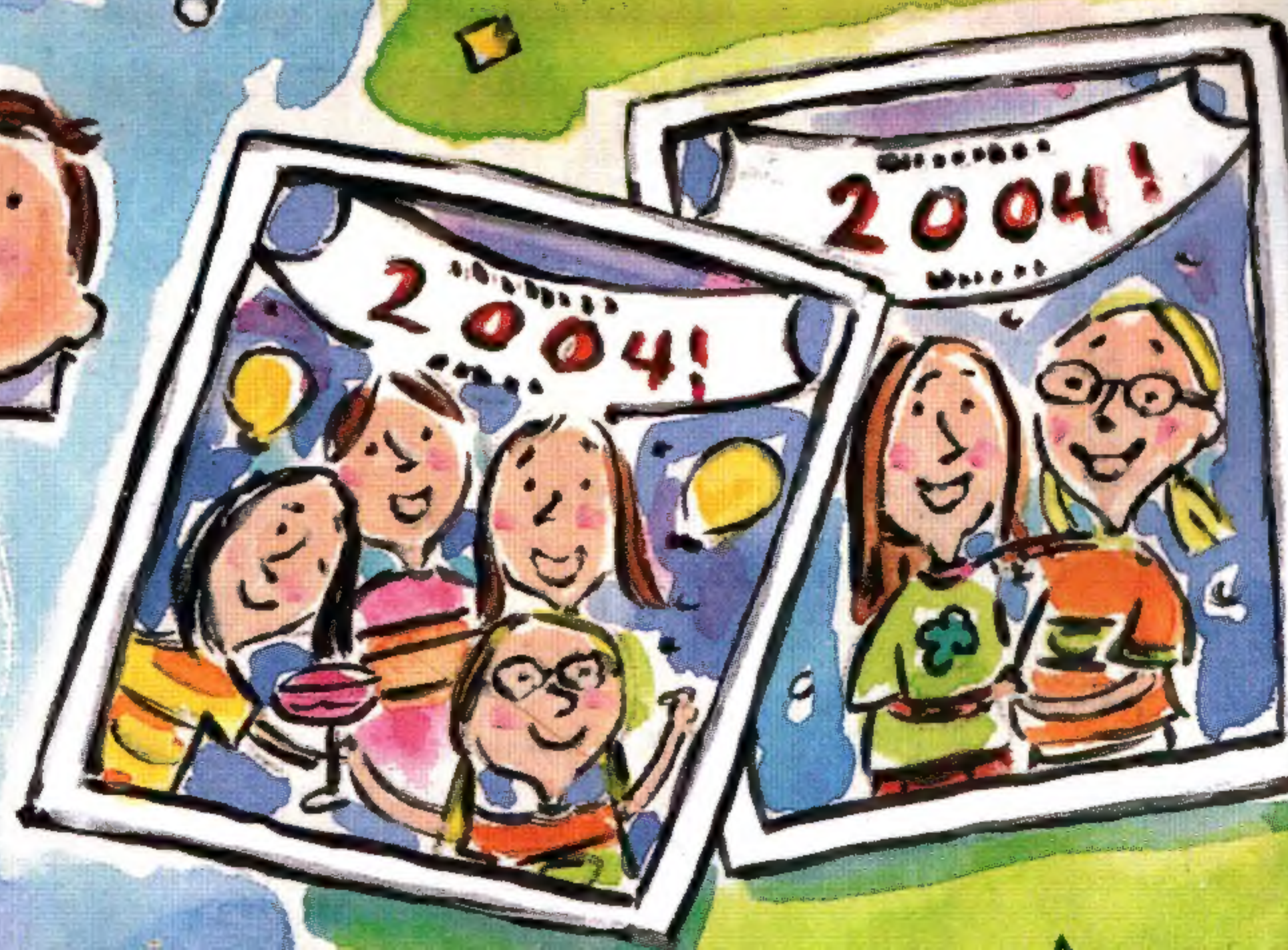
See who can walk the farthest or fastest with a balloon held between his or her knees.

Crabwalk Race

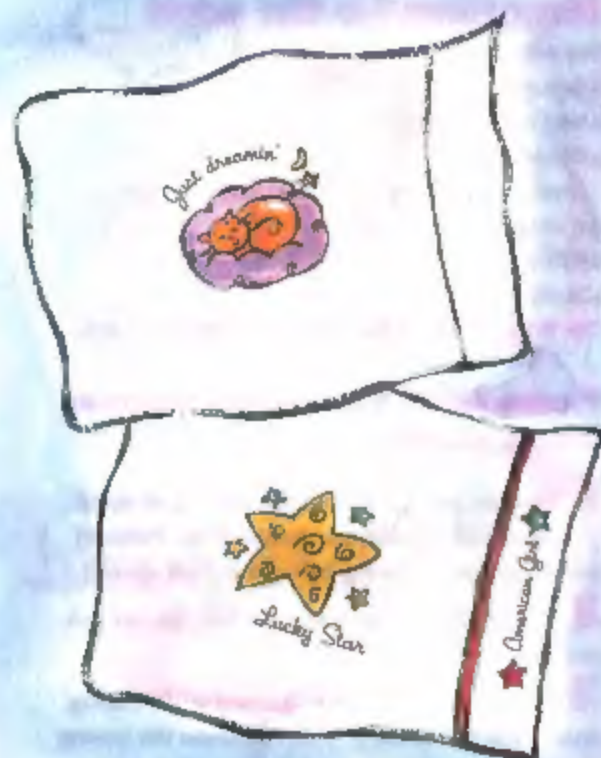
Set a bunch of balloons in the middle of the room. Divide guests into two teams. Set a timer for two minutes. All players must crabwalk while they try to get as many balloons to their side of the room as possible. The team with the most balloons at the end of two minutes wins.

Remember the Night

Create a fun backdrop that says "2004" and take pictures in front of it with your guests. You'll have a great souvenir from a fabulous night! ★



Design a dreamy pillowcase!



AG Iron-Ons

Ask an adult to iron on the transfers for you.
Do not try to do it yourself.

Directions for the adult

You will need:

- Scissors
 - Iron and ironing board
 - Pillowcase (use a cotton/poly blend, not 100% cotton)
 - 2 sheets of white paper
 - Straight pins
 - Watch with second hand
- Tip: If the pillowcase is new, wash and dry it first.

Please read all directions carefully before starting.

- 1 Carefully cut out the design, leaving at least 1/4-inch excess around the design. Note: Finished iron-on image will be much brighter than shown.
- 2 Preheat the iron to cotton setting. Do not use any steam.
- 3 Slip the pillowcase over the end of the ironing board. Slip one sheet of paper between the ironing board and the pillowcase. This will help keep any color from bleeding through.
- 4 Position the transfer facedown, using the outline on the back as a guide. Gently cover the transfer with the other sheet of paper. Pin the paper to the fabric to keep it from slipping.
- 5 Iron over the transfer for 1 minute and 15 seconds, pressing down lightly and moving the iron constantly.
- 6 Wait 2 full minutes for the transfer to cool. Carefully remove the paper and the used transfer. The transfer cannot be reused.
- 7 Wash and dry the pillowcase as directed. Do not use chlorine bleach.

Illustrations: Anahela Haley

